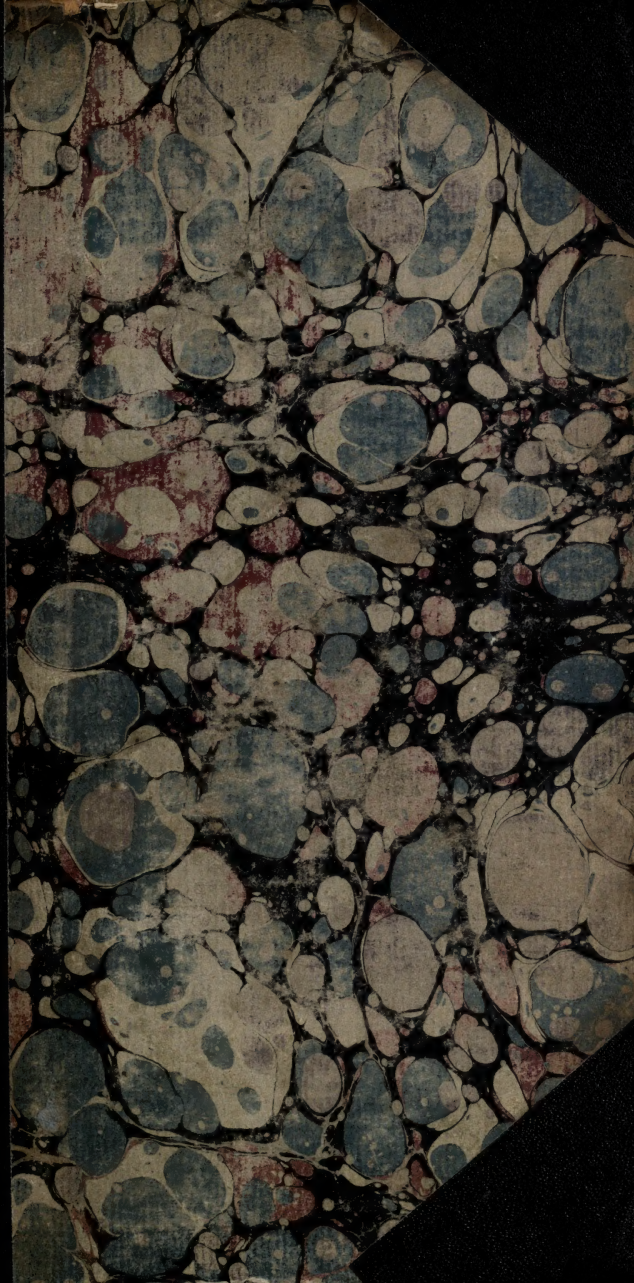


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A

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S E R M O N

On the DELUSIVE and PERSECUTING
SPIRIT of POPERY.



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MDCCLXXIX.

LETTER

TO

AND

TO HIS

OF THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE
OF THE



LONDON

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MDCCLXXII



TO

Doct^r FORDYCE.

REVEREND SIR,

TO counteract the baneful effects of
misrepresentation, to support the
cause of important truth, and to diffuse
a general spirit of philanthropy and mutual
forbearance among the various orders of
society, are certainly objects of high mo-

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ment;

ment ; they demand the attention of the Christian, the Philosopher, and the Citizen. Impressed with these ideas, it is not surprising I should address myself to the man, who has this moment excited their lively recollection. I have been reading, Sir, your Sermon of the 10th of February last, on the *Delusive and Persecuting Spirit of Popery*.---This has been often the favourite subject of impassioned declamation ; it has rung from the pulpit ; and it has stained innumerable pages.---But though affected, as a member of that religion, by whatever might seem calculated to traduce her character, or tarnish her real honour, I have hitherto been little solicitous to oppose the voice of declamation. Silence, on such occasions, is often the most effectual means of defending innocence. But there are men, whose assertions carry conviction to the mind ; who are able to make impressions, whether in favour of truth or error, which may prove too fatal in their
con-

consequences. Such a man is Dr. Fordyce; he speaks with authority, and he persuades as he speaks.

I was, I confess, not a little amazed, when I saw advertised the subject of your Sermon; and in the perusal I felt emotions, which were unusual to me: I had been so long habituated to the most severe attacks on my religious principles, that my mind seemed callous to all future impression. But we are ever alive to what strikes and astonishes; and indeed I was astonished to find you among the number of those, who still retained all the prejudices of confined education; much more that, in a meditated discourse, you had endeavoured to impress the same prejudices deeper on the minds of the multitude.----“ The greater part of this Sermon (you say) was preached five and twenty years ago, in the presence, and by the appointment of a numerous and respectable body of the

Scotch Clergy."---And, in the long space of five and twenty years, have you not seen reason to alter your sentiments in favour of Roman Catholics! Prejudices, I know, are with difficulty removed; and when they have withstood the pressure of five and twenty years, I fear they are fixed for ever. It was however natural to expect, that the milder air of South Britain, would have much contributed to have relaxed that rigid tone of fibre, on which many of our mental associations greatly depend. We are meek, beneficent, and humane; or we are stern, untractable, and severe; not only as organization favours, and as education gives the bias, but even as the southern breeze, or the northern blast more frequently agitates our nerves.

My design is not to enter the field of controversy with you. I could only repeat what has been said a thousand times before,

fore, and what has been well said. If the able apologies for our religion have carried no conviction to your mind (for them certainly you have read) all that I might say in that line, would be equally ineffectual. But I will meet you as a man of sense and information, as a man who has read the human mind, and contemplated the rise, the progress, and general influence of our passions. On this ground alone I wish to walk : controversial altercation I dislike : I am sure, it never benefited the cause of truth.---Truth, Sir, requires not the flimsy parade of words ; nor does it wish the support of pompous and inflamed oratory. Of this you seem not to have been aware in the discourse before me : but you well knew the effect of declamation on the unsuspecting mind of ignorance, and, for once, Dr. Fordyce aimed by undue influence to command the attention, and to fix the sentiments of his hearers. If his motive was laudable, he has even my commendation ; and I will not yet suppose he
could

could be actuated by any passion, which might disgrace the character of a sincere and honest man.

I have one request to make, which, I know, you will not refuse me : it is, that I may be allowed to understand what are the real tenets of my own religion, and may be credited when I tell you, what the Roman Catholic admits and what he rejects. The most hostile disposition, it seems, should not be averse from this concession ; yet, singular as the case is, we alone of all the human race (for it is a privilege granted to the disciple of Mahomet and Confucius, to the Indian Gentoo and American Savage) are not permitted to know what we think, or to be credited in our most solemn asseverations.

With you I can express an equal concern for the interests of truth, of virtue, and of liberty ; and did I think that any encouragement which has been given to the
pro-

professors of my religion, could retard the progress of those important principles, I should even deem it my duty to oppose every relaxation of Penal Law. Truth and virtue might perhaps, in some inferior degree, subsist without liberty; but the virtue of a slave is not worth possession, and as for truth, her progress will be insensible, where liberty expands not the mental powers, and animates the enquiry.

But you conceive, an indifference for the cause of Protestantism, or, as you esteem it, of true religion it is, that inclined the Legislative power to relieve us of part of the heavy load, which pressed us to the earth. Little, I think, must a man have attended to the essential spirit of Reformation, who sees not that universal toleration is its first and leading principle. If man, in his religious concerns, has no right to think for himself, it will be found a task of difficulty to exculpate the first

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Reformers, or even their followers, from the crime of rebellion against the established Church. No, Sir; it is real philanthropy, that is, the true spirit of Christianity, which now begins to loosen those iron fetters, in which party-zeal and bigotry, had long bound up the free minds of men.

I condemn, probably more severely than you do, that a untractable spirit, which has driven America to separate from us, and to league with France. But little can I think that coolness for religion, or insensibility to the pernicious character of Popery, has at all contributed to influence their resolves: much less can I approve of your violent invective against France, because France professes the religion of Rome. The man of candour fixes not the seat of virtue in any particular clime, or under the influence of any particular religious persuasion; and I fear, were it incum-

incumbent on me to form a disadvantageous opinion, either of the truth, or the tendency of any religion, from the general conduct, or political character of it's professors, weighty would be the charge on thirteen entire provinces, confederated against the legal authority of king and country. The truth is; in France and in America, in England and in Spain, the passions, and not the religious faith, of politicians, concert plans of Ambition, and lead them into execution.----That Great Britain and France will ever be enemies, seems probable from the relative characters, and local situations of two rival kingdoms; but why this hostile disposition, on the side of France, should be the effect of her religion, and not so with us, is a problem above the reach of my Philosophy: at all events, tell me, why these nations were never more inimical, than when the same mode of faith was equally professed by both.---“ Adultery,

you say, is reduced even to a system," in the French dominions. It is the first time, I have heard it. But take care, Sir, how you infer the fallhood of a religion, from the unrestrained commission of that fashionable vice.

I readily allow that the portion of scripture, you have selected for your text, is in the last degree striking.----
*By thy sorceries were all nations deceived;
 and in her was found the blood of prophets,
 and of Saints, and of all that were slain up-
 on earth.*---“ That it refers, you observe, to the Church of Rome, famed for delusion and cruelty, is the firm opinion of the best Critics.” I know there have been Critics, and those of high reputation, who have applied this and similar passages to our Church: but you must likewise know, that there have been other Critics, equally renowned for learning, and a warm attachment to religion, who have made very different applica-
 tions

tions. They applied them, in the first instance, to Pagan Rome, and in succession to the unnumbered Sectaries, who have appeared in the Church: other applications, and other references have been made, agreeably to the genius, the passions, and the religious zeal of those, who have dared to interpret those mysterious pages. The same motives, which directed the Critic in his interpretation, served to influence the determination of their respective admirers. I doubt not, but the Book of Revelations, contains an exact history of the Church, in her various states of growth, diffemination, and maturity; but only the successive evolution of events, it should seem, can properly mark its several parts, and teach their application.--Dr. Fordyce; let you and I take care we shew nothing really *antichristian* in our lives and conduct, and leave the application of dreadful and mysterious truths to that Being, who

alone, probably, unerringly comprehends their full import and proper direction.

“ The grand Impostor, whom you have in view, you say, does not only acquire and maintain his authority by the most detestable frauds, but likewise destroys the souls of men, by numberless ungodly arts of deluding them into a fond conceit that piety may consist without virtue, nay, that they may be extremely religious though extremely wicked &c. (p. 4.).” I have with pain extracted this passage, which I offer to your cool reflection. I would not have believed that a man of candour and integrity, much less that a minister of truth and peace, could have pronounced such words, had I not seen them under the sanction of the name of Dr. Fordyce! I make no other comment---Refutation would be insult---and I feel for poor human nature

nature thus a prey to passion and party-zeal.

You now enter, with dreadful pomp, on a minute delineation of what you term the *Sorceries* of the Church of Rome.--- How I may be able to follow you through this dreary region, where religion and humanity are pictured as standing aghast at every step, I know not. But really, my reason shrinks from the attempt, and nothing, I assure you, but a sincere regard for truth and the sacred duties of a member of Society should force me forward.

The description you give, of the Christian system established by its great Founder, is fair and captivating (p. 6), "The Church of Rome, you observe, has so altered and disguised this glorious scheme, as wholly to deface its beauty, and greatly to obstruct its success."---Indeed, Sir, it is not so. We have uninterruptedly laboured to preserve each feature of the
 Chris-

Christian Scheme, and I trust, with some success. The apologists of our religion have repeatedly discussed each article of their creed; they have endeavoured to shew, by critical and historical detail, that we have ever preserved, pure and unimpaired, the religion of primitive ages; nor hitherto has it been *demonstrated* that in their researches, they were deceived. Of this I am sure, that no pulpit-declaration can be ever esteemed a satisfactory reply to the cool and deliberate deductions of the Divine or the Critic. To the perusal of these apologies you and I shall bring dispositions and views widely different, and you well know the effect of pre-established habits of thought. So circumstanced, we may be neither of us perhaps fully competent to rational decision; but when we determine to what appears most conformable to truth, that determination must meet the approbation of heaven.

Yet

Yet you tell us (with the most positive assurance) that "the system of Popery is a direct apostacy from the religion of Christ, and the practice of popery a direct revolt from the kingdom of Christ." (p. 7.) These are harsh terms --- I fear they flow from a mind too deeply prejudiced, and therefore ill-adapted to the business of temperate discussion. Believe me, Sir, such language may soothe the gross feelings of an illiterate multitude, but they are no indication of rational conviction, much less do they speak that respectful deference, which is ever due to the sentiments of others, who certainly have an equal right with yourself, to chuse their modes of faith and religious observance.--I will add further; as it would be highly uncandid to refer the serious enquirer to your Sermon for a faithful description of the Catholic religion; so neither would I recommend him to pages, which have been penned
by

by the hand of intemperate zeal, for the genuine character of Protestantism. Every mode of Enthusiasm is of a similar complexion: they who feel its impression, are equally strangers to the moderation of reason, and the persuasive voice of ingenuous candor.

You do not deny the *possibility* of salvation, even in the Church of Rome--We thank you--You allow that there have been amongst us "persons of exalted virtue, and who in the article of internal devotion, or what is properly styled the spirit of piety, have soared as noble heights, and breathed as divine sentiments, as ever were attained by uninspired mortality." (p. 7.) The panegyric is finely drawn--It speaks a delicacy of sentiment, I little expected from a mind, in which seem concentrated ideas of the most gloomy and frightful aspect. These then may be perhaps the result of some malignant, but momentary, association. I wish it may be so. However, there

there seems an absurdity in the very supposition, that examples of real piety and exalted virtue, could have existed in a church, such as you have described. The explication you give, by no means accounts for the phenomenon. I know, a man may be exceedingly mistaken in his religious opinions, and yet be perfectly sincere in the practice of virtue. But when the *entire System* of faith and morality is corrupted, it cannot be that the professors of it, may rise to the splendid heights of sanctity---nothing but vice, and that of the darkest die, can flow from so polluted a source. It is likewise observable that minds, most susceptible of the warm influence of Religion, are always most nearly attached to its various tenets. It is with them even criminal to deviate from established forms. Can it then be that, nurtured in the bosom of the religion, you describe, with each impression, it suggests, deeply graven on their hearts, they could have been holy

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and virtuous, even in the extreme? The possibility of such an effect will, I am confident, be denied by those, who are best acquainted with the character of the human heart.

“ We Protestants, you add, reproach the Church of Rome for the want of charity; let us never imitate her in the most antichristian of all dispositions.” (p. 8.)---If I understand the common idiom of language, every line of your Sermon speaks this want of charity. As I live, I would not have uttered words of such seeming malignity, against the most obdurate and determined enemy!--I would have treated with more lenity the followers of the Arabian prophet: I might pity, but I could not revile them.--But I must attend you with aching steps through your dreary progress.

Ibant obscuri sola sub nocte

VIRG.

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In opposition to what you justly term the true Spirit of Christianity, that it aims to penetrate, to engage, and to purify the heart, you draw another frightful picture of Popery. "Popery, you say, does just the reverse." (p. 9.) In confirmation of this, is exhibited a curious detail of practices, in which you obligingly place the essential spirit of our religion.--You have yet, Sir, to learn, I perceive, the first rudiments of that religion. I refer you to our catechisms: they may be found in the hands of every child, who begins to speak.--And was it, think you, by the practice of mere ceremonial forms, that the persons, you had just before described, arose to those heights of piety? So certainly you must confess it was: for they, you allow, were Roman Catholics, and your positive assertion is, that the sum of our religion

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is a mere display of uselefs and tinsel ceremony.

We have, I know, much more of form, and more of pomp in the ceremonial part of our religion, than is practised in your Church. But the true meaning of all this is, I trust, no secret to us. They contribute to illustrate, to give dignity, and to support the splendor of divine worship. But the vital and substantial part, which informs the judgment and purifies the heart, is the first and important object. It is alone essential to religion.---When the great truths of christianity have been duly impressed, when the mind is awake to a sense of its own infirmities, and begins to rise to the contemplation of the source of grace and sanctity, where lies the harm, that external ceremony should be called in to promote and animate the important work.----Such is our present habit of mind, derived from the connection we hold with matter, that it is with extreme difficulty we
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can even raise ourselves to the view of intellectual objects : every thought partakes more or less of the dull source from whence it flows. What then more likely to confine an imagination, ever intent on matter, and wandering from abstracted contemplation, than the view of ceremonies, which, as they are drawn from the specific character, and express more emphatically the meaning of the religious object, cannot but impress the mind very forcibly ? It is only in this light we consider the nature and general expediency of religious ceremonies.

As to their multiplicity, and what is by some thought their too frequent use ; I can only say, that much, in this respect, depends on the particular genius of men and nations. We of northern climate certainly require much less than would satisfy our southern neighbours. And I firmly believe, if Christianity, instead of proceeding from the East, had been first
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established in the regions nearer to the arctic circle, the ceremonies, which now crowd our Ritual, would have been considerably less numerous, less animated, and less prominent.

But there is nothing which, as times and circumstances vary, is not open to abuse ; and there is no practice, how well calculated and well directed, that language may not vilify and hold up to ridicule. I am acquainted with Protestants, men interested in the cause of religion, who would be pleased to see a little more dress thrown over their too naked form of worship, and some few external incentives added, which might contribute to awe and fix the attention particularly of the rude and unlettered. Yet I much wish, that Rituals of ceremony were properly modified to the respective character of each nation.---You see, Sir, I with pleasure turn my attention from your sportive description of beads,

beads, bowings, and crucifixes, to a manly discussion of the nature, use, and propriety of ceremonial forms.

Have you really so little conversed with Catholics, as to imagine them ignorant to the degree, you mention? Or, who informed you, that a fundamental maxim with us is, "that ignorance is the mother of devotion?" (p. 10)--- I cannot properly animadvert on such charges, without the use of terms, which, as a gentleman, I know not how to apply.---But we hide, you say, the Scriptures from the Laity.---Indeed we do not. The Scriptures are translated into every modern language; and I only desire you to ask the first Catholic, you converse with, whether he has not a bible in his possession? I know he should have. It is our wish that the ignorant would not read the Scriptures without some assistance; for you well know how open such minds are to delusion and false impression. There is, I
allow,

allow in many countries a standing prohibition against reading the scriptures in modern language : but that prohibition was wisely made at a time, when innumerable false translations, as we judged them, were circulated ; and though the prohibition, from a similar reason, be not recalled, yet permission to read approved versions is granted without difficulty, it is even warmly pressed on the attention of every individual amongst us.

Now comes on your grand exhibition, --The *Magician of Rome*, surrounded with "all his spells and implements of delusion, his salt, his ashes, his wax, his unguents, his--I blush to transcribe the remainder of this highly finished period ! (p. 11.) Nor will I blur my page with the vulgar delineation you have given, of the character of the Roman Pontiff, attended by his Clergy and other Ministers.

ters. Indeed, had it been drawn by the hand of ignorant prejudice, I could not have excused it, so far does it sink beneath the level of common decency. There was a time perhaps, when such descriptions might have been listened to ---they were at no time ever credited---even that day is, I trust, long since past.

Roman Catholic ministers, like those of every other persuasion, have been often too much influenced by the force of passion; they have felt the goad of ambition; they have bowed the head to the idol of interest; they have been allured by the parade of power, and the attractions of pleasure. All this is within the circle of human depravity. But the voice of reason and religion was ever loud in her opposition to those ruling passions: she spoke to the ambitious Pontiff, to the ignorant Priest, and to the luxurious Monk. If little attention was given, let the severity of censure be

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cast, where alone it should fall.--The Pope of Rome we consider as placed at the head of Church Jurisdiction ; as such, he enjoys peculiar privileges and metropolitan powers ; but those are all confined within the just bounds of a regular, a limited, and equipoised constitution. Believe me---for we are neither slaves nor idiots---he is possessed of no one power, or attribute, which you, in the wildest flow of fancy have ascribed to him.

You well observe that “ in every communion, the principles and manners of mankind are greatly influenced by those of their public teachers.” (p. 13.) --Undoubtedly they are : but I will be bold to assert, that the principles and manners of Catholic teachers, are as pure and as conformable to the spirit of Christianity, as are those of any other communion, under the wide canopy of heaven. We are men, however, and we bewail the common lot of human infirmity.

firmity. Are the weaknesſes, the crimes, the follies of men in general, to be given to human paſſion ; and do ourſelves alone originate from the principles and native tendency of our religions!

With ſimilar touches of delicacy, you portray the characters of thoſe, who with us are honoured with the appellation of *Saints*. “ We have complimented, you obſerve, with the higheſt poſſible dignities in the other world perſons, who were unworthy and unfit to live in this, whoſe principal recommendation appears from hiſtory to have been uncommon flagitiouſneſs, or uncommon phrenzy.” (p. 14.) --This, Sir, is the language of intemperate prejudice. If, from an attentive view of the lives of thoſe men, whom you ſo liberally cenſure, you ſincerely think them deſerving of it, the error perhaps may lie in your own ideas of virtue and Chriſtian perfection. The fixed line of virtue or of vice, appears

sometimes to rise or fall, as it is taken from different points of view, or as varies the deceptious eye of the beholder. For my part, I see much in their lives to admire, and much I could wish to imitate. But they also were men, as you and I are.

Yet, though so villainous had not been the characters, which disgrace our calendar, still, it seems, the *worship*, as you style it, of Saints and Angels "is not more repugnant to Scripture, than inconsistent with the unrivalled adoration due to the one Supreme." (p. 14)

-- You have doubtless seen the many fair explications, we have given of this part of Catholic devotion. After that, can you still prevail on yourself to place things in a light so distant from all semblance of truth? No Sir; we *worship* alone the one Supreme; but we have learned to treat with *respect* the memories of men, whose eminent
virtues

virtues seem to us deserving of it; and we beg them to *assist* us in our addresses to him, who is the only source of grace and mercy.--- This is the full extent of our belief and practice. The abuses of ignorance, and the hyperbolical expressions of wanton piety, are equally foreign from the spirit of religion. We condemn them.

Will you excuse me for omitting to censure your pleasant reflections on Image-kissing &c. as also your ingenious conceit of a public bank or treasury, "out of which, you observe, those who have no virtue of their own, may be conveniently supplied at a small expence." (p. 16) The whole is indeed prettily imagined; but, from lassitude and a reiterated view of discordant and frightful imagery, I find myself in too serious a mood, to be amused even by the most prominent features of wit or buffoonery. But was it becoming, think
you

you, the dignity of the pulpit, by fiction, to play with the fancy, and raise a smile on the countenance of gaping attention? It might however be some relief from the too severe impression of your general ideas.

To proceed; for I now perceive I am fairly entered on a land of fiction. In your next paragraph (p. 16, 17) where you pretend to enumerate other maxims and doctrines, as you call them, of our Church, I read a long list of no less than eleven distinct charges, which, (but you would not credit my solemn oath) from the first to the last, in the sense of your application, are no more a part of real Catholic doctrine, than they may belong to the creed of the Hurons, or to the wild inhabitants of the Terra del Fuego. The assertions of whimsical individuals, or of whimsical Societies, it is no more my business,
as

as a Catholic, to support, than it is yours.

Come we now to Purgatory: "what a gulf of delusion, you emphatically exclaim, opens to view; in which it is impossible to say, how many souls have perished!" (p. 17)---Purgatory, Sir, has been often a fruitful source of declamation; but here likewise (though it is now my only expectation) I find you are equally uninformed. May I then be never more allowed to reason with you; and must my flat contradiction be the only reply, I can make, to every future assertion? I much fear, it will be so. It is indeed painful to an ingenuous and philosophic mind, through a long progress, only to meet the ghastly forms of deception and error;

Terribiles visu formæ!

You perceive, Sir, the association of ideas, whereby the descent of the Trojan

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jan wanderer through the Infernal regions, is brought to my mind.

Every opinion that tends to remove or weaken those restraints, which religion has opposed to vice and passion, is certainly obnoxious in the extreme. Such you think, is our doctrine of Purgatory; and undoubtedly it would be so, if, as you represent it, we were taught to consider the pains of that place, as calculated to efface every stain of guilt, that human depravity might incur. We think not so. Admitting, as we deem it consistent with reason, an essential difference in the criminality of transgressions, we cannot consign to equal punishment hereafter, the unrepenting perpetrators of every crime. We are not easily persuaded, that to murder a parent with every aggravation of atrocity, or to wound the fair reputation of innocence, are only crimes of the same venial character, with the stealth of a far-thing.

thing, or a hasty word of passion. Yet the guilt of every transgression must be done away, before we can be admitted to seats of purest virtue and transcendent excellence.---The doctrine then of Purgatory is, to my apprehension, grounded on the clearest deductions of reason, supported by the express declarations of Scripture and traditional authority.

Seeing things in this light, you cannot be surpris'd, I should pay little deference to your declamatory assertions, unsupported as they are by the least ray of rational probability. Permit me then to leave in that mass of fiction, which is their proper place, your amusing reflections on Pilgrimages and Penances, auricular confession and extreme unction, indulgences, pardons, dispensations, &c. (p. 18.)--A wide field this for every elegant trope of polished oratory ! Nor will I attempt to unbind the flowery wreath, with which an

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admiring and affectionate audience has encircled your brows.

I must only observe : The best things as they are liable to be misconstrued, so are they liable to be abused. But as I condemn misconstruction, particularly when obviously wilful, so do I every abuse, in proportion to its degree of infamy.---“ It is the aim, you add, of Popery, to make people believe that they may be as wicked as they will, with safety for the next world, as well as the present.”---Fie, Dr. Fordyce !

I have done with your first part, describing the delusive arts, or rather *Sorceries* (for the term is more emphatically elegant) of the Church of Rome. If you applaud me, it will be well and singular. This I know ; I have so far honestly endeavoured to support the cause of insulted truth and injured innocence.

The

Your second part opens in dreadful scenery---“ This abandoned and sanguinary Prostitute, not contented with corrupting the souls of those who were seduced by her, has frequently killed the bodies of those who were not.”---She goes out to the work of blood, “ armed with bulls in one hand and daggers in the other, provided with a horrid apparatus of faggots, axes, racks, and gibbets, and accompanied with a hideous train of executioners.” (p 20, 21.)---Seriously---for in the midst of all these horrors, by an unaccountable impression, I feel myself inclined to laugh---in the name of common decency, Reverend Sir, What is it you mean? I cannot even attempt a reply; for your imagination, soaring on the wings of wildest phrenzy, has wandered far beyond the utmost ken of reason! Yet, fatiguing as the flight must be, when every rational power is not quite suppressed, you pursue the arduous journey through three

entire pages, marking every line with the dismal epithets of *blood, carnage, and desolation*. However, as your Sermon was preached on the 10th of February last (the day of general fast, which, one would think, should have rather abated the rampancy of your Soul) you may, by this time perhaps, be again restored to a state of cool moderation. On this supposition, I submit to your reflection a few remarks on what is, in common language, styled the *persecuting and intolerant* spirit of the Catholic Church.

The question before me is of wide extent : But this is not the place for minute discussion.---It will not, I well know, be denied, though the reflection is exceedingly painful, that many enormities and cruelties have been perpetrated under the shameful pretence of maintaining the dignity and purity of holy Religion. This has been no uncommon policy, not among Catholics only ; for we find it as
strongly

strongly marked in the general conduct of every sect of Christians, who have engaged in the violence of factious dispute, or the impetuous opposition of enthusiasm. The observation is confirmed by every page of ecclesiastical memoir. But the pictures of these excesses are generally overcharged, as they are drawn by the abettors of the respective parties: whilst each friend to his own faction aims, by undue partiality, to screen the infamy, by which, he thinks, the fame of those whom he loves, will be too deeply tarnished.---I grant then, that Christian Rome has *persecuted*, (for I wish not to palliate by using the softer term of *prosecution*) too many of her steps have been stained with the blood, and moistened by the tears of the suffering and the afflicted.

But it is not, I apprehend, with regard to facts (which however in their number, and in their circumstances, the voice
of

of declamatory party-rage has shamefully exaggerated) that Criticism labours; it is about the principle, the leading spirit of that religion, whose members I allow to have often exceeded the bounds of Christian moderation and humanity.

--Had not the Roman Catholic, at all times, been equally exposed to the influence of passion, with the rest of mankind, his actions, I own, should not be tried by any common rule; but as we never enjoyed that enviable prerogative, every maxim of reason obliges me to account for similar effects, by reference to similar causes. To depart from this fixed principle, is to give up the only ground, on which accuracy of judgment may rest. It is by this criterion alone the present question can be determined: and if, through the long evolution of nearly eighteen centuries, any fact of Catholic persecution can be adduced, from circumstances or other motives, evidently not ascribable to this ruling principle,

principle, passion, or the bad policy of states, I will leave the field, and proclaim my own defeat.-----I throw down the gauntlet of defiance.--Be aware, Sir ; passion has a thousand forms, and is never the less active, because concealed under the robe of virtue or Christian zeal.

As I reason on the excesses of my own Church, so do you on those of the Dissenters from it. What you take yourself, that latitude allow also to me. For an instant, let us both run over the sad prospect of contention and bloodshed, which, not much time ago, desolated the kingdoms of Germany, France, and Holland. We see the Catholic states striving, by excess of zeal, to maintain the established worship, I may also add, the established forms of government ; whilst, on the other hand, with at least equal intemperance, the flaming Sectaries are aiming to overthrow

throw both, and to establish themselves on their ruins.--I think you must allow this view to be faithfully taken.--As then, on one side, Passion instigated the rulers at least of faction; so, on the other, was it also Passion which drew the sword, and sheathed it in the breast of opposition.

To come nearer home.--The same fiery cast of soul, inflamed by every bad untamed passion, which hurried the tyrant Henry to acts of the deepest cruelty, sunk to a more solemn gloom in the breast of his daughter Mary, lighted up the fires of Smithfield: Nor was her Virgin Sister, though more artful and dissembling, less delighted with scenes of blood, or more moved by the cries of suffering innocence.--Is it fair then, that the excesses of Mary should be ascribed to the influence of her religious persuasion, and that those of Henry and Elizabeth, should be laid to the account
of

of ferocious or designing passion.--The respective ministers of this bloody family, as is always the case, either caught the spirit, or faithfully executed the orders of authority : And the same reasoning applies to the general conduct of all, who engaged in this unchristian scheme, of propagating or maintaining religion.

But that the native tendency of Catholicism is not to persecution, I refer you to the cool sentiments of those, who all along looked with horror and detestation on the sad conduct of their brethren ; I refer you to the declarations of those writers, men of the first information and piety, who have recorded the actions and designs of the contending parties ; I refer you to those pages of instruction, where are delineated the real principles of our religion ; I refer you to the Scriptures themselves, those sacred sources, from which the

true doctrine of Catholics is derived; and I refer you to the living voice of every well-informed and dispassionate man through the wide regions of Catholic belief.

You mention, with reproach to us, the holy wars or Crusades. They, Sir, more properly belong to the annals of Romantic Chivalry.---But I am more surprised to see again objected the mad gunpowder plot, and the imaginary horrors of an Irish massacre. All this business had, I thought, been long since done away; nor did I ever expect to hear more of the gunpowder charge at least, unless from the silly voice of childhood on the fifth of November.---Was it from forgetfulness, that you omitted entertaining your friends with a description of the London fire?--As to the Inquisition; it is, I believe bad enough; but as in those few countries, where it now subsists, it is used principally

pally as an engine of State-policy, I leave you to discuss that point with the Courts of Madrid and Lisbon; likewise whatever you esteem censurable in their conquest of America.

What has been said on the *persecuting*, is nearly applicable to the supposed *intolerant* spirit of our religion. The *spirit* of our religion is not intolerant; but the professors of it have often been so, and that from passion, from interest, from ambition, from enthusiasm, and the blind zeal of bigotry. You see, Sir, I plead no exemption from these influencing and ruling motives. Churches, I am firmly persuaded, of every denomination, to which either concurrence of circumstances, or the prejudices, and interested views of men, have given power and jurisdiction, will ever, as such, be more or less intolerant. Of this the cause may be easily discovered, marked on the nature of the human mind, actuated, as

it ever has been, by internal passion, and the irritation of external allurements. ---A close alliance between Church and State, may be deemed by politicians a necessary arrangement; but I fear it has greatly injured the real interest and object of Religion. I could wish much to see--but the realizing of my wish must be left to the kingdom of Utopia--the cause of religion clearly separated from the cause of policy. If men, in the choice and practice of their religious duties, had no other view, but what should arise from the impression of truth, a regard for their maker, and sincere Christian charity, there would be little place for animosity, little for party-zeal, little for interested ambition, little for exclusive privilege, and still less for persecuting intolerance. -- Intolerance then, whether it wear a triple crown, a scarlet hat, or a mitre; whether it walk about, with solemn pace, in cowl or cassock, or

in the more humble drefs of affected purity, is ftill derived from a fimilar caufe, and can never, as I apprehend, meet the approbation of reafon, or the fanktion of Chriftianity.

If Catholics have been more intolerant than other focieties of chriftians, it has happened, becaufe we had been longer in poffeffion of a prefcriptive right to power and extenfive jurifdiction; becaufe the the defigns of oppofition were generally wild and exuberant; becaufe the principles of our religion had been long eftablifhed, and generally adopted; becaufe thefe had been intimately blended into the fyftems of political government; and becaufe the riches we poffeffed, we wifhed not to furrender into the hands of others.---This, I believe, is a fair expofition of the real ftate of things; but it makes nothing againft the effential fpirit and native tendency of the Catholic

tholic religion, which breathes peace, lenity, concord, and social amity to all men.

I have seen you through your two divisions. May I remain your companion some moments longer. A few remarks on the remaining subject will suffice me.

You are thankful, you say, to providence for having been educated in the Protestant belief---Be it so---I am equally thankful to the same Power for the religion I profess.---Who informed you, that three or four out of five daughters amongst us, are generally imprisoned during life, far from the chearful haunts of men, and the friendly offices of society, in solitary cells and gloomy cloisters?---You are too fond of misrepresentation---It is not so---Those places of retirement may be abused: they sometimes are. In
other

other respects they have their advantages, agreeably to circumstances of life, and dispositions of mind.--- "our parents possess not in general the feelings of natural affection." (p. 24). Do you really think so? Perhaps also the brute part of our creation is steeled, by popish infection, against that tenderness for offspring which softens the rest of their race.

As to the open avowal of infidelity or atheism, prevalent, you say, in France and Italy, and which you seem to think an easy step from Popery: in the first place, such monstrous deviations from truth are not so common, as represented; I believe, not more so than with us---Then, the genius of the French particularly is inconstant and fond of novelty however absurd --- and lastly, where the case has happened, it has generally proceeded from the lecture of books, or conversation of men drawn from a land, over whose excesses I wish to throw a veil....

At

At all events, such defections from truth and virtue are always the visible effect of indulged and rampant passion. No religion, as such, is at all allied to infidelity or Atheism.---The superior advantages which, as Protestants, you think, you enjoy, and which you so highly extol, I would not deprive you of. But surely, you desire not such privileges to be exclusive: let other societies cherish, with satisfactory emotion, such blessings, with which, they trust, Providence has kindly indulged them also.

You again strongly express your fears, that "the love of many is waxed cold;" and that even, "Protestant dissenters sprung from those zealous men, the *old Puritans*, can now-a-days think of Popery with the utmost tranquillity." (p. 27.) --Art thou then descended from some old Puritan?--And doth the spirit of thy progenitor hang closely round thy heart?--Zealous man!--The riddle is then

gotry, Enthusiasm, and confirmed prejudice, are the very worst passions, that debase the human mind: no element of virtue, Christian or social, can resist their baneful influence.

With reason you condemn the too common affectation of professing universal benevolence, philosophy, and freedom from vulgar prejudice. Often such language is void of all meaning. You even go so far as to declare, that you feel more affection in your heart for an honest Papist, who lives virtuously, than for those people who are perpetually haranguing about the beautiful qualities just mentioned.---You are too good to us! But the misery is, if your description of Popery be just, it is no more possible for a Roman Catholic to be virtuous and honest, than it is for a determined fanatic to be fond of truth, or to wish well to mankind.

In

In the succeeding lines I am dragged through a tedious chain of usual declamation on what, you term "the less offensive, but still very hurtful absurdities of Popery." You then ask with seeming triumph : " Have Catholics (though now perhaps somewhat enlightened by the diffusion of learning and philosophy) publicly reprobated a single error in the established system, or dropped a single practice of their former superstition? Have they in a body expressed one sentiment of toleration, or given the smallest hint of Christian charity for those who differ from them? Have they not always, if they could do it with safety, betrayed the rancour of persecution, when roused by ecclesiastical motives? If from political considerations the Protestants in France are not now subjected to the same cruelties as before, the smallness of their number, not exciting the same jealousy; can it be

said, that their condition is respectable, advantageous, or secure?" (p. 31.)--I shall reply to these several questions.

1st. We have reprobated no error in our religious system, because we know of none. Where practices have been judged superstitious, sensible men have always condemned, and authority has endeavoured to suppress them.----2d. I do not know that, *in a body*, we have expressed any sentiment of toleration. The opinions of individuals are well known. But for reasons already assigned, Toleration is not easily introduced, where a form of worship and church-jurisdiction has been legally established, and even incorporated into the system of civil policy. We have, however, felt, and as strongly expressed, the true spirit of Christian charity for those who differ from us. This, Dr. Fordyce, is more than every man, or every body of men, have done, who profess the greatest abhorrence of Catholic principles.---3d.

We

We have not *always*, even when it might be done with safety, betrayed the rancour of persecution, when roused by ecclesiastical motives: I refer you to the annals of our own and of former times.---

4th. I agree that the condition of Protestants in France is neither very respectable, advantageous, or secure. We may probably live to see it more so. Jealousy, founded on too certain a suspicion, and other political considerations, have been hitherto a bar to that relaxation of severity, which humanity and the voice of religion otherwise called for. England has set an example which even France must imitate.

You allow, that neither the religious nor civil rights of this kingdom have any thing to fear from those amongst us, who have native virtue enough, in spite of principles, to abhor every kind and degree of inhumanity, and to disapprove of tenets, which they apprehend to be impious

pious and immoral (p. 32.) Believe me, Sir, the man, who feels not such sentiments, has no pretensions to rank with any Christian or civilized Society upon earth. A Pretender to our religion may be inhuman ; his actions may be impious and immoral. We incite, but cannot impel to virtue.

You mention the oaths provided by a late act of Parliament in our favour, and to which Roman Catholics have unanimously subscribed. This conduct, at least with regard to men of worth and honour, you say, was not "very consistent:" because (you add) they ought to separate from a community, that "pretends to sanctify the breach of the most sacred ties."---"How can they express, (you go on to observe) in the strongest terms imaginable, their detestation of this damnable doctrine, and total disbelief of the Pope's having the least power to absolve them from such obligations, and

and yet profess to believe in Popery ; a religion which, they know, rests on the infallibility and unlimited authority of the Pope as its very foundation, and ascribes to him, as an unalienable right, the full power of dispensing with all crimes whatsoever, the foulest not excepted." (p. 32.)

--- Dr. Fordyce ; if you are really ignorant, I blush at your effrontery ; but if, in the conviction of their falshood, you have dared to make these assertions ; I leave the naming of your crime to pens, more versed than mine in the darkest colours of language. In no single word of the whole charge, divide it as far as matter is divisible, is there the least element of Truth.---The reader will pardon this short fally of honest indignation.---We freely and chearfully subscribed to the tendered oath, and each voice, in the face of Heaven, spoke the sincerest sentiments of his heart.

But

But however much you may be disposed to rely on the good behaviour of many Popish Gentlemen, and however heartily you may rejoice in the secular advantages lately held out to all of our communion, still you "cannot enter, you say, so readily into the wisdom or propriety of permitting Popish Priests to open Chapels and Schools in any part of England" (p. 33.)---I suspect, you have even misconstrued the act of Parliament: However, the favours we possess, have been granted by a wise Legislature, the jealous guardians of the civil and religious rights of the nation. Our conduct, I trust, will shew that we deserved the indulgence.

Fear not, Sir, the downfall of your religion. Truth has nothing to apprehend from the most active exertions, even of unabating zeal. Do you, in proportion to the freedom which others enjoy of expressing their sentiments, oppose

pose that active ministry, which so much becomes the Christian Teacher. But *misrepresent* not : That cause must be bad indeed, which requires the aid of so infamous a support. From that quarter it will receive a more mortal stab, than the incessant attempts of legions of crafty and abandoned Priests (as you politely style them) could ever inflict.

"We would not, God knows, (you humanely protest) hurt, in the smallest instance, a single Papist living".--Not in the smallest instance ! -- I trust, you would not draw against him the flaming sword of persecution : But there are other weapons, which can inflict a more deadly and corrosive wound. Or, do you think us made of that stern mettle, as not to feel the bite of defamation ? Do you think we are insensible to language, which holds us out as the most determined enemies to God and man ?--I have

I read

read your Sermon of the 10th of February !

“ But surely (you add) neither the laws of charity, nor the rules of candour, demand that we should lay ourselves open to be injured by Papists in our most essential interests.” (p. 34.)--- We will not injure you. We feel every impression of warmest gratitude for the blessings of present ease ; and besides, Sir, we have learnt to “ love our enemies, to bless them that curse us, to do good to them that hate us, and to pray for them which despitefully use us.”

“ We thank God (they are your own words) for inclining so many of our Brethren in Scotland, among persons of the best understanding and greatest humanity, to express a disapprobation of any measure that might expose their part of the kingdom yet more to the inroads

roads and machinations of Popery." (p. 34.)— I am indeed sorry to hear from your mouth, that persons of the *best understanding and greatest humanity* in Scotland, have abetted the measures lately exerted in that part of the kingdom. Are the powers then of intellect, so far as yet bound up in that northern climate; and is the tender fibre of humanity so benumbed, as neither to see the truth of those enlarged principles, which the rest of Europe has generally adopted, or as not to pity the hard fate, and endeavour to ease the heavy load, which had long oppressed an inoffensive and deserving portion of his Majesty's subjects? Believe me, in the annals of the 18th century, the conduct of Scotland in this affair, will be recorded as a singular instance of uncivilized and savage manners; and it will be well for the reputation of those men of *understanding and humanity* who supported it,

that it will not be credited.--Does that stage likewise of your brethren's conduct meet your approbation, wherein the lives of innocent men were exposed to dreadful danger, and their property destroyed by the wild phrenzy of a lawless and fanatical mob? But these also were men of *understanding* and *humanity*!

In a general assembly of the Church of Scotland, the warmest endeavours of the friends to *Toleration* were opposed; and *Intolerance* (I am told) carried it by the majority of a HUNDRED!--The various means subsequently employed to prejudice still more the minds of ignorance, and to rouse them to deeds of violence, are faithfully recorded in the red page of *Persecution*.---I mean this censure should only fall where it is due. Numbers, I know, saw and pitied; but they durst not give relief. They blush, and almost wish to hide the native accent

cent of Caledonia.--In England would not a similar attempt give you pleasure? But alas! the minds of Englishmen are open to the enlargement of liberal truth, and every impression of gentlest humanity.

I beg leave, in opposition to the contracted ideas of the Scottish Church, to give you the free Sentiments of a Bishop of the Church of England, Doctor Ross of Exeter.

“ It was long (says he) and once almost universally thought, that pains and penalties were necessary to promote the glory of God, and the interests of religion; and that those who had the power, had the right to torment and punish their fellow-creatures here for the good of their souls, and to secure their salvation hereafter. Hence arose irreconcilable hatred and resentment, and the world was often filled with confusion and bloodshed. But, we are now grown wiser;

we

we know that the "fear of God," or true notions of the divine nature, direct us to a different conduct. We have learned also from experience, as well as from reason, the great injustice and bad policy of this measure. We are convinced, that *every man, while he continues a peaceable subject*, has a right to follow the dictates of his own conscience, in the professing of his faith, and the worshipping of God; that the attempt of compelling men to follow the consciences of others, is as dangerous to public peace, as destructive of true religion; and lastly that the best means to preserve and promote both, are to withdraw that attempt; to treat *all* who differ from us in opinion with brotherly affection and charity; and to leave them at liberty to determine for themselves, what they ought to believe as necessary to salvation; and what they ought to perform in the worship of God, as most acceptable to him.

" Our

“ Our ancestors at the revolution acted on this principle. Among the many excellent improvements which were made in our constitution about that period, the toleration of Protestant Dissenters was not the least. It banished, as far as it went, persecution and oppression on account of religion, from amongst us. It removed a great blemish, which disgraced our religious establishment, and contributed to increase its strength, as well as to improve its beauty. In a word, it put a stop to as many evils, and produced as much good, as perhaps the principles and spirit of *those times* would then allow; and left to those who came after them, the *duty* and *glory* of finishing, at a proper period, the work which they began.

“ That season, I trust, is now approaching. An opportunity will, I hope, soon

soon be offered to us, of shewing that we deserve the *character*, which we have long assumed among Protestants, of placing religious liberty on its true foundation; and of giving to *all* who dissent from our religious establishment, and are good subjects of the state, that legal security, to which reason, and the Gospel, and sound policy, undoubtedly entitle them."

Such are the liberal and christian Sentiments of a minister of the Church of England, spoken before the Lords Spiritual and Temporal on the 30th of January last, and which, after receiving parliamentary approbation, were by their order published to the world. I am happy also in the reflection, that they are the general Sentiments of the English nation. How different----but I shall make no farther application. The waters of Tweed must be gifted with a contractile and petrifying

trifling quality, widely different from that of our silver Thames !

I have done with your Sermon.—On a review of the general business, I see little to correct, and nothing I could wish not to have said. If I have omitted noticing any passage, you think deserved an explicit reply ; it was done without design. I could have no motive for the omission. My animadversions have been in general concise. I wished to make them so. The exposition of truth requires neither multiplicity of words, nor the superfluous parade of language.—If any of my reflections should seem to you rather warm and animated ; recollect the style and spirit of your own discourse. I wrote as I felt : words of momentary indignation mechanically escaped me. I sat down to your sermon in the coolest apathy. I meant to reason the point philosophically with you. It was impossible

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possible

possible ; and you may believe me, I should not have exposed my nerves to the disagreeable vibrations, attendant on so irksome a task, had not motives, superior to the love of ease, impelled me to it.

I shall not be answered by quotations from a hundred authors. Am I responsible for the extravagances of a courtly Bellarmin, studious of extending Papal jurisdiction ; or for the follies of an Escobar, fabricating, in idle fancy, loose codes of morality ? I shall singly abide by the authority of approved pages of catechistical instruction, and the opinions of the dispassionate and well-informed. Every church has had its ignorant and interested declaimers, its whimsical theorists, and its casuists, of lax, of various, and of wanton character. The doctrine of such men, we neither follow, nor defend.

Had

Had you been satisfied, Sir, with the honest and Christian design of inculcating on the attention of your followers, a steady attachment to the principles of their religion; had you warned them against the dangers of Seduction; and inspired them with the sincerest zeal for the Protestant cause, you should have had my applause; because you then would have done your duty. But, by the most glaring misrepresentation of our principles, to aggravate the prejudices of the ignorant, to steel their hearts against compassion, and to hold us up as proper objects of contempt--perhaps of persecution--was an attempt, Dr. Fordyce, unbecoming the man and the Christian.

Indeed, I might have answered you in much fewer words; because I could have said--and it would have been strictly true--that from the first to the
last

last page of your Sermon, in all your
charges against us, there was not A
SINGLE WORD OF TRUTH.

I am,

March 27,
1779.

Reverend Sir,

Your obedient humble Servant,

* * * * *

F I N I S.

THE
STATE and BEHAVIOUR
OF
ENGLISH CATHOLICS,
FROM
The Reformation to the Year 1780.

T H E
STATE and BEHAVIOUR
O F
ENGLISH CATHOLICS,
F R O M
The Reformation to the Year 1780.
W I T H
A VIEW of their PRESENT NUMBER,
WEALTH, CHARACTER, &c.

I N T W O P A R T S .

SIC NOS IN LUCE TIMEMUS
INTERDUM, NIHILO QUÆ SUNT METUENDA MAGIS, QUAM
QUÆ PUERI IN TENEBRIS PAVITANT, FINGUNTQUE FUTURA.
LUCRET.

L O N D O N :
Printed for R. FAULDER, New-Bond-Street.
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REPUBLICAN PARTY

1890

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P R E F A C E.

BEFORE the press be closed, I see a propriety in prefixing a few observations. When in manuscript, the following pages were submitted to the inspection of friends; they made objections, which I attended to; and I made some alterations at their request. I could not do all they desired, because I could not totally sacrifice my own ways of thinking. I owed something to myself, as well as to them.

The printed sheets have also been seen by others, whose moderation and improved abilities I greatly value. It is proper, attention should be paid to their remarks. They have told me that,

I should have quoted *authorities* for what, on many occasions, I have said.

My answer is—That my information has been principally taken from well-known sources; from Lord Clarendon, Bishop Burnet, Mr. Hume, and other writers on English History. I wished not to crowd an humble page with the pom-

pous display of great names. It was necessary to read much, but I could collect little: Catholics, for many years back, had made too inconsiderable a figure in the drama of human life, to attract the notice of the annalist or the historian. In the most crowded narratives of English business, they seldom appear, unless where peevish humour brings them forward, for an object of censure or of malignant satire. There is a *Church History of England, from the year 1500 to the year 1688*, published some years ago by a Catholic Clergyman, which was of use to me. It contains many things, regarding Catholics, during that period, extremely curious and well authenticated.—The delineation of modern Catholics was generally drawn from my own observation and experience.

They have told me, I am too animated, too free, and occasionally too severe on all parties; that Catholics may not be pleased, and that Protestants may be offended.

My answer is—If I am *too animated*, it is not my fault. I write as I feel; and the regulating of the state of my nerves is not at my own option. Besides, the view
of

of many things I had to contemplate, was of a nature sufficiently stimulant to rouse powers much less irritable than mine. After all, dull composition is but a sorry entertainment,—If I write with *freedom*; let it be remembered, I am an Englishman; and though oppressed, my thoughts are not shackled, nor am I tongue-tied. It is a well-known description of a good historian, given by Cicero, when Rome was no longer free, *Ne quid falsi dicere audeat, ne quid veri non audeat*; that is, *Let him dare to speak all truth, let him not dare to tell a lie*.—I do not think I have been too severe on any party. I saw faults on all sides, and those faults I censured. If Catholics be not pleased: They may know, that I did not write with views of pleasing them. I aimed to inform, and if possible, to correct. Lords, Priests, and Commons, now have, and always have had, something in their characters and in their manners, which is reprehensible. They would not wish I should flatter them. If Protestants be offended at any thing I have said, I shall be sorry, because I did not mean to give offence. Do they however suppose, their conduct has not been often extremely censurable?

It has been said—That I generally use the word *Catholic* without the restrictive term *Roman*; and that I studiously avoid the words *Papist* and *Popery*.—It is true, I have intentionally done so. Why should I apply an unnecessary epithet, when the single appellation of *Catholic* sufficiently distinguished the party I was describing? Besides, the word *Roman* has been given us to intimate some *undue* attachment to the See of Rome. *Catholic* is an old family name, which we have never forfeited.—The words *Popery* and *Papist* are peculiarly insulting. I am no Papist, nor is my Religion Popery. The one and the other have no proper existence, but in the misrepresentations of our adversaries; something of them may perhaps be found in the kingdoms of Italy, Spain, and Portugal.

Such, I think, are the principal objections, which have hitherto reached me: But there is a class of men amongst us, whose opinions I wish to combat.—They are enemies to every species of writing on the business of Catholics. We should not, they say, raise the observation of the public; our security is in our obscurity; if noticed, the law may be called in to lash us

us into silence; what signify charges, however gross and defamatory; it is not possible to remove the national odium; we are now unmolested, who knows how long we may continue so, if we dare to shew our faces?

Such, and much more, is the language of these very prudent, very cautious, very provident, and very timid Gentlemen. Whilst the tumults of last summer were raging in the Metropolis, their voice was heard tremblingly giving counsel: "For God-sake, said they, let us instantly petition parliament to repeal this obnoxious bill; it is better to confess we are guilty of all the crimes laid to our charge, than to be burnt in our houses!" It was *wonderous pitiful*; and they dared to carry about a form of a petition to that effect, praying for the signature of names! "We told you, continued they, what would be the event of your addresses to the throne, your oaths of allegiance, and your repeal of laws."

How far, in certain circumstances, it might be adviseable to keep silence, I will not pretend to say. This I know, it is a
conduct

conduct we practised for many years, but from it was never derived any good.— Silence may be construed into a conviction of guilt, as well as of innocence. Before the repeal of the *Act* of William we were not molested; that is, not perpetually molested, (for there were some very recent instances of signal molestation) but our condition, at all times, was of that debasing and irksome nature, which would have justified the most active exertions. Shall I sit down silently satisfied, because the good humour of a Magistrate chuses to indulge me; whilst there are laws of which any miscreant has daily power to enforce the execution? My ease, my property, and my life are at the disposal of every villain, and I am to be pleased, because he is not at this time disposed to deprive me of them. To-morrow his humour may vary, and I shall then be obliged to hide my head in some dark corner, or to fly from this land of boasted liberty. It is surely better *not to be*, than to live in a state of such anxious and dreadful uncertainty.

However, as the eyes of the public are now open upon us, the reasons which,
with

with some plausibility, might have been urged for silence, subsist no longer. It is now our duty to say, and to do every thing, that can keep up the public attention. The more we are viewed, the more our principles are weighed, and the more our conduct is scrutinized, the more will it appear, that we are deserving of every indulgence. Why is innocence to retire from inspection ; and why is merit to fear the prying eye of the severest inquisition ? I wish to see every element of our lives and principles most scrupulously analysed ; and I will do my utmost to promote the work. I am not sanguine enough to imagine, that it will be in our power to extirpate the national odium, or to stop the cry of malignant defamation : But posterity may feel the good effects of our endeavours. At all events, when men seem cautious to avoid enquiry, a suspicion is raised, either that they fear the result, or that there is something beneath the surface, which they wish not to expose to public inspection.—I would always avoid controversial disputes about religion ; because on these subjects every thing has been said, which human ingenuity and zeal for religion could suggest : But as
long

long as the question is, should this or that sect of Christians be *tolerated* or be *persecuted*, it is the duty of every man to plead the cause of human nature.

I must not lay down my pen, without advertiing to* two recent publications, which I have just read: *A Free Address to the Protestant Petitioners*, by a *Lover of Peace and Truth*, and *Mr. Burke's Speech to the Electors of Bristol*.—*The Lover of Peace and Truth* is, I am told, Dr. Priestley; the character indeed of the man is strongly marked in the publication; and never was any work better calculated to answer the purpose for which it was designed; it is justly levelled to the capacities of those, on whom it was intended to operate; it is plain, honest, unadorned, and christian. Nothing can point out more decisively the extent of Dr. Priestley's abilities, than the facility with which he descends from the heights of scientific enquiry, to the humble walks of moral instruction; in the same breath he reads lectures to the Philosopher, the Divine, and the Statesman, and he guides the lowly multitude to the practice of domestic and social virtue. The tenets of our Church
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he indeed treats with too much asperity : It is not the error of his heart ; but he pursues, what he esteems the corruptions of religion, with unremitting ardour. I have often conversed with him : He is extremely liberal, and an enemy to every species of restraint on conscience. I blame him for his too free deviations from the received opinions of mankind. By this he has raised up enemies ; but all the liberty he takes to himself, he would give in the fullest latitude to others. Had Dr. Priestley no blemishes, he would soar, by the powers of his mind, beyond the reach of common nature ; I view, therefore, with malignant satisfaction, the few spots which thinly darken his surface.

Mr. Burke's *Speech*, wherein he replies to the objections that had been made to his parliamentary conduct, is a manly composition. He had been principally blamed for the very decided part he took in the Catholic bill. He meets the charge, in its greatest strength, before his late Constituents ; and he tells them, so far from seeing criminality in that conduct, he gloried in what he had done ; because, in opposition to fanaticism and intolerant

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zeal,

zeal, he had supported the rights of human nature, and aimed to emancipate a deserving body of fellow-citizens from the iron hand of oppression.—Mr. Burke! *we thank you!* May you be soon restored to those walls, which, in your absence, seem shorn of their brightest beams!

Lucem redde tuæ, Vir. bone, patriæ:

Instar veris enim vultus ubi tuus

Affulsit populo, gravior it dies,

Et soles melius nitent. HORAT.

With every thinking man it must surely be a proof highly in our favour, that we have not a friend, in either house, whom honour and virtue do not call their friend. When I name the Chancellor, I name the first man in this, or perhaps in any other kingdom: And were I to name all those, who wish to give relief to Catholics, I think I should name whatever this nation has greatest to boast of, in liberality of sentiment, extent of abilities, love of liberty, and ardour to maintain the rights of mankind. Supported by these pillars, it is not possible we can fall; should we fall, ruin thus circumstanced would be more enviable than triumph.

I have only to beg the indulgence of my readers to the many faults which the following pages will exhibit. I was straitened for time, and my sources of information were scanty. However, I have done my best. Where my language is deficient, the man of candour will recollect that, when eleven years old I was sent to a foreign land for education, and did not return till after almost twenty years of miserable exile.

CARLTON, Dec. 3, 1780.

THE

E R R A T A.

- Page 8. Line 16. for *would*, read *could*.
P. 31. l. 6. ditto.
P. 43. l. 20. for *rests*, read *rest*.
P. 56. l. 25. after the words, *who knew nothing*
of the first, put a full point.
P. 128. l. 1. after *natural*, read *or*.

THE
STATE and BEHAVIOUR
OF
ENGLISH CATHOLICS

FROM THE
REFORMATION to the present Year 1780.

PART I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE riots which, some months ago, threatened destruction to the Capital of the British Empire, and the debates consequent thereupon in both houses of parliament, have given rise to much speculation. It is obvious to enquire, from whence such commotions could have arisen. Under the popular cry, *No Popery*, an *Association* had been formed; and the members of this association were the ostensible agents in the confusion and devastation which succeeded. Was then an ap-

Introduction

A apprehension

Introduction prehension of the *increase* of Popery, from the indulgence Catholics had lately received, the real instrument which convened the *Associators*, and which produced their tumultuous application to parliament? I am ready to believe that much of the evil which was done, in the demolition of private and of national property, was merely accidental; that it was effected by the horrid activity of such miscreants, as are ever ready, under the screen of popular commotion, to practise their bad designs. Where no sufficient ground is given for fair supposition, it would be wrong to infer any preconcerted plan for general destruction. Some years hence, perhaps, we may be better able to form a judgment.—I am also ready to allow, that the *Protestant Association* might be influenced by motives, to them of a cogent and weighty nature. They might seriously apprehend, from a supposed increase of *Popery*, that danger threatened the established Church, and the civil Constitution of Great Britain. It became their duty therefore to take the alarm, and to petition for the repeal of an obnoxious act.—In reasoning on a dark subject, I am willing to make all allowances that the circumstances of things, or
the

the operation of human passions, can justify. Introduction

From a general view indeed of the characters of those men, who formed the *Protestant Association*, it will be more rational, I believe, to conclude, that they had no distinct object before them : For they were not qualified to combine ideas, or to project schemes of operation. To all appearance there never was so illiterate and rude a multitude : But their minds, open to every impression, had been struck by an artful description of imaginary evils ; and they followed blindly every impulse of their leaders. What were the views of these men, I pretend not to say : Perhaps they also were seriously apprehensive ; or perhaps, (which I should rather suspect to be the case) under the cover of fictitious dread, and of vain solicitude for the good of religion, they had formed their designs, in which ambition or disappointed passion had a leading interest. But I wish not to hazard a decided opinion.

It is a reflection not easily reconcileable with the present advanced state of the human mind ; however, I am much disposed

Introduction to believe that it was the dread alone of Popery which instigated the Associators. The records of bigotry and fanaticism will ever occupy a large space in the annals of mankind. A person but little acquainted with the general sentiments of Englishmen, in the business of religion, will be necessitated to draw the same conclusion. There still remains in the mind of almost every Protestant, from the highest to the lowest, from the best-informed to the most ignorant, from the infidel to the zealot, and from the fanatic to the man of cool reason, a rooted prejudice against the name of *Catholic*, which no time, I fear, or the efforts of philosophy, will ever erase. No sooner is the infant mind susceptible of the slightest impression, than it is the business of the nurse to paint a hideous form, and that she calls *Popery*. Every circumstance of horror, and all the scenery of glowing imagination, is called in to deck the curious phantom. Nor afterwards is it the aim of better judgment to remove this false impression; rather all the arts of declamation are sedulously employed to give it a more fixed and lasting permanency. Few men, I believe, are strangers to the inveterate obstinacy of such early notions.

At

At the beginning of what is called the *Reformation*, it was natural to expect that the old religion, against which such mighty designs were formed, would be held out, by the new apostles, in colours best calculated to rouse every idea of distaste and detestation. To have engaged in so arduous a work, without such assistance, would have been the extreme of folly. Fortunately for their designs, the general corruption which had long prevailed over the face of Christianity, afforded too abundant matter for censure; and this circumstance the Reformers well knew how to turn to their own advantage. They wilfully confounded abuses in *practice* with abuses in *belief*; asserting that the Christian *faith* had been corrupted, when they knew the adjuncts, that is, the inventions of men only were bad; and thus forcibly blending together objects so really distinct, they ungenerously drew a representation full of horror, on which rose the whole fabric of the reformed religion.--Though I highly condemn the conduct of the first Reformers, it is not my intention to cast censure on the Protestants of the present day: The cause is entirely their own: Nor is it at all my wish to enter into controversial dispute.

The

Introduction The Christian world has wrangled too long. But if the declaration of historical truth give offence, it is a proof that it has not been sufficiently urged.

I wish to contemplate the revolutions in Church and State, with the cool indifference of philosophy. On every side may be discovered many traces of similar passions; and very few events there are in either, wherein reason and the amiable influence of virtue had any leading concern. That great revolution, by which Christianity was introduced, is always to be excepted.—I allow, however, that much good was *eventually* derived to the Christian Church from the Reformation. The professors of the old religion were roused to more active virtue; they saw the necessity of proper discrimination betwixt human inventions and divine institutions; and a spirit of universal enquiry was soon set on foot, the happy effects of which are now experienced. But the Reformers might have aimed at the correction of abuses, without touching, with profane hands, the vital substance; or surely they might have proceeded in a spirit of more moderation, and with less appearance of passion
and

and interested zeal. Had they done so, Introduction
 their names had gone down with more reverence to the grave; and we should not now have to lament those feuds and deep animosities which have for ever divided the Christian world.

More than two centuries are now elapsed since the first days of Reformation. It was natural to expect that long ago all that rancour and heated recrimination would have subsided, which first animated the contending parties. When the *Secretaries* had firmly established themselves; that is, when their opinions had taken fast hold, had new-modelled the political constitutions of many kingdoms, and had made with them one connected and almost indissoluble mass, they had nothing, it seems, further to apprehend. The policy therefore of representing *Papery*, with a hundred heads and a hundred arms, ready to devour and to destroy, subsisted no longer. Yet still the same arts of imposition were used, and always with the same success.—It cannot indeed be denied but fresh incentives were soon added to keep up the acrimony of old impressions, and many of these were of a complexion really alarming.

Introduction ing. The barbarities practised by the Catholics on many, whose sole crime often was difference in belief, cannot be too much execrated; and the blood of innocence, which was then spilled, became the seed of fatal animosities. In those wars, indeed, in which whole provinces, and even kingdoms were engaged, and wherein, under the veil of zeal for religion, crimes of every description were perpetrated, equal blame, it seems, may be justly cast on both sides. It was often the bad policy of states, or the intemperate pretensions of faction, which gave rise to these contentions: Religion at least would have no concern, though her sacred name was for ever blasphemed.—The unprejudiced man, if such a one there be, in perusing the annals of those bad days, will find abundant matter for indiscriminate reprehension; and he will close the page equally shocked and equally exasperated at the conduct of all parties.

On

ON a review of the transactions of Henry VIII. my own country, in matters of religion, (for I wish to confine myself within these limits) it is not difficult, I think, to form a decided and just opinion. The Reformation was here introduced by means the most violent and oppressive. The tyrant Henry could use no other. Deprived of their property, persecuted in their persons, and defamed in their reputation, could it be expected that *English* Catholics would, in silence, forsake the religion of their forefathers, however erroneous it had been, or, without reluctance, bow their heads to oppression? He indeed must be peculiarly clear-sighted who, through this whole reign, can discover, in any one instance, the genuine spirit of Christian Reformation. It was not, at least, by such means that primitive Christianity was established; though I know it is sometimes by pestilence and by storms that the benevolent designs of Providence are conducted. But I mean not to dwell longer on the events of this reign, when the cause of Catholics was the common cause of the nation. Moderate men are little inclined to give credit to the report

Henry VIII. of numberless crimes and flagitious enormities, of which they were accused; because the views of his Majesty and the rapacity of Courtiers wanted such a plea in vindication of their conduct.

Edward VI. DURING the short period of Edward's reign, the work of Reformation went on, gradually acquiring form and permanency. Less severity was sometimes used, than the nation had before experienced; but moderation, at these times, was an unknown virtue. I would rather leave my friend in error, than make him a proselyte to truth by such means.—At the death of the late King, things were in great confusion; the old religion had been violently shaken, but the tenets of the new one were neither established nor even publicly known. Henry himself had been really no friend to the Reformers; impetuosity of temper had alone driven him to such outrageous attacks on a religion he interiorly revered; and by his last will he solemnly ordained, and charges all his successors to take care, that *Masses* be daily said in the Chapel at Windsor, *while the world shall endure.*—

The

The friends to the *Reformation* saw the necessity of taking effectual measures. Great part of the Nobility, many of the Gentry, and the Bishops with the inferior Clergy, were still much attached to the ancient form of worship. The protector *Somerſet*, and *Cranmer*, that ductile and time-serving Priest, almost ſingly engaged in the holy work, and they ſucceeded. All oppoſition was weak againſt the exceſſive power of ſuch crafty and formidable Miniſters. Some fruitleſs attempts were made; but it now appeared, that the eſtabliſhment of the new religion, was the only means of ſecuring to the firſt occupiers the poſſeſſion of the Church-wealth they had already laid their hands on; it would alſo open a door to new acquiſitions from the ſame quarter. This it was, and not love for religion, that ſo well promoted the reforming ſcheme—and not only the revenues of the Church, but the libraries alſo, underwent a dreadful ſcrutiny. Thoſe of Weſtmiſter and Oxford were ordered to be ranned, and purged of all Romiſh ſuperſtition. Many of the moſt valuable books, even of human literature, were plated with gold and ſilver. “ This, as far as

Edward VI.

Edward VI. we can guess, says Collier, was the superstition which destroyed them." Works of Geometry and Astronomy were at once known to contain magic, this was rank Popery; and they threw them into the flames. The universities, unable to stop the fury of these worthy Reformers, silently looked on, and trembled for their own security.

Mary. AS I condemn the boisterous violence of Henry, and the unpopular and gothic conduct of Edward's Ministers, so do I condemn the proceedings of Mary, who, by ways equally reprehensible, aimed to restore what her father and infant brother had overthrown. They, and their Counsellors, were alike strangers to the dictates of reason and to the genuine principles of true religion. Yet it cannot seem strange, if such Catholics as had remained firmly attached to the old worship, eagerly embraced the first occasion of reinstating themselves. In so doing passion would too often intervene; nor was it an easy task to refrain from some retaliation, whilst the wounds they had received were fresh and bleeding.—But nothing surely can be
more

more uncandid than the reflections of Protestants, when they speak of these times. They can ascribe the mad conduct of Henry to the impulse of violent passion; but in Mary they pretend to see nothing but a mind contracted, as they say, by the bigoted and sanguinary principles of her religion. I hate a man thus miserably partial to his own cause.

It is worth notice, that Sir Thomas Wyatt, who headed a formidable insurrection against Mary, was himself a Catholic. A treaty of marriage had been concluded betwixt the Queen and Philip of Spain. No step, it was judged, could be better calculated to support the cause of Catholicity; but it was by some feared that England had much reason to be jealous of so close a connexion with a crown, whose great ambition now aimed at universal monarchy: Hurried on by an impulse of rash patriotism, Wyatt therefore rose in arms. The love of his country outweighed every other consideration.

IN the year 1558, Elizabeth ascended the throne of England. At this time begins

Mary.

Elizabeth.

Elizabeth.

gins the real era of English Reformation, and consequently from this time Catholics are to be considered as a sect, dissenting from the national Church.—To enter on a minute detail of the many events, in the line of religious politics, which rapidly succeeded one another, during this long reign, would carry me too far; but I shall not willingly omit any circumstance which can serve to mark the real character of Catholics. The most rigorous penal laws were now enacted against them, and they were carried into execution under various pretences. They were accused of sedition, and of engaging in the most unremitted attempts against the person of their Sovereign and the established religion, with a view to introduce a Popish successor, and, on the ruins of Protestantism, to re-establish the Catholic faith. I will not say that no Catholics were ever guilty of these crimes. It could not possibly be otherwise: for they were men, and they had the passions of men. What man, when he either thinks himself ill-used, or really is so, will not strive to gain redress? *Un ver de terre se resent, quand on lui marche*, said, at this time, a much-injured Princess, in a letter addressed to her cruel persecutrix: But the body
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of Catholics, which was then very considerable, never engaged in, and never encouraged, any schemes of sedition or treason. Yet, surely, no condition was ever more humiliating than theirs; and if they did not ardently look forward to any event that might give them relief, oppression must have deadened every feeling of nature!

Elizabeth.

Plots, whether real or fictitious, in the hands of an able politician, are those fortunate engines, which he will know how to turn to every possible use. The darkness in which they are involved supplies the greatest latitude of interpretation. If *real*, as plots are seldom attended with success, the arm of government will be strengthened by their detection, and notice will be given for the application of such remedies as may seem necessary to the support of the state. Its defects or weak parts are now laid open. The heads of seditious intrigue will either be taken off, or will be secured against further attempts: Faction will be broken. The ruling powers have then acquired a more firm and extensive energy.—*Fictitious* plots are attended with still greater advantages. By
their

Elizabeth. their means some devoted party may be marked out, and be consigned to a fatal and national odium. At that moment the statesman's hand is armed with a potent wand, whereby he will be able to conjure up all the spirits of the deep. He will gratify his creatures with the forfeited spoils of the unhappy sufferers; private animosities will find room for the exertion of resentment; revenge and all the passions of interest will know no bounds. In the mean-time the attention of the credulous and unsuspecting multitude is caught; an impression is made; and their minds are raised to the view of dreadful dangers and imaginary horrors. — The crafty minister will probably seize this critical hour for carrying into execution some favourite and unpopular design.

Such phantom-plots are with us no new device. We may see them practised in every reign: But the Catholics of England, from the time of the Reformation, have felt their fatal effects in fullest measure. The religion they professed was directly contrary to the statutes of the nation: Being compelled to seek for education in foreign countries, they easily fell under
suspicious

suspensions of being in the interest of those Elizabeth.
Princes, who had given them protection :
They admitted, as a part of their religious
belief, a certain supremacy of jurisdiction
in the Roman Pontiff, which, though in
itself no real cause of jealousy, was then
often misconceived, and sometimes very
improperly exercised ; in a word, they
were oppressed, and therefore not without
reason suspected of an habitual inclination
to shake off the galling chain, whenever
occasion should offer. Thus circumstan-
ced, the condition of Catholics became a
common repertory, from whence it was
easy to draw such plot-materials, as the
views of party or the situation of things
seemed most to require.

Their condition was not intolerably
grievous till the year 1569, the 11th of
Elizabeth, when the misbehaviour of a
few men drew a persecution on the whole
body, and occasioned those penal and san-
guinary laws, to which their property and
lives have been ever since exposed. From
that time, by a strange perversion of the
common rules of reasoning, a *Catholic* and
a *Rebel* have been viewed as synonymous
objects ; and infamy was stamped on the
C name.—

Elizabeth. name.—An insurrection, under the Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland, two Catholic Peers, was raised in the North. Discontented from various causes, but under pretence of redressing the public grievances, and of supporting the old religion, they took up arms. They were joined by a considerable body of their dependents and northern friends: but the Catholics of the other parts of the kingdom, as our best historians agree, publicly declared against them, and loyally offered their lives and their purses for the defence of her Majesty. The rebellion was soon crushed; but government had now an handle given them, the Catholics were doomed to destruction, and the laws of the 13th of Elizabeth were framed against them.

By these acts, religion and civil allegiance were so artfully blended, that an impeachment in either served both purposes; and a constant fund was established for the manufacturing of plots, when the national politics called for a stratagem. An occasion soon offered. A treaty of marriage had been for some time carried on between the Queen and the French Duke of Anjou. Ministry disliked the alliance, and the
subtle

subtle Walsingham was resolved to obstruct Elizabeth. It might be prejudicial to the Reformation; or at least it might procure some toleration for Catholics. The determination was to make the Duke odious to the English nation. A rumour was spread abroad of a deep design. It was said, that in the Colleges at Rheims and Rome, to which places the Catholics had been compelled to retire for education, a plot had been formed to subvert the government, and to destroy the Queen. To accomplish this grand purpose, the Priests had engaged themselves by a solemn oath before the Bishop of Rome.—Never was there a more groundless charge; for I do not find, that it possessed one single atom of the most distant truth. But the Minister had provided himself with a miscreant band of witnesses, who were ready for any work. Their names and characters are upon record. Hypocritical, indigent, and abandoned, they had not the smallest remains of reputation left amongst them. The nation was, however, well disposed to give credit. Some Priests were found guilty, condemned, and executed. This, says Camden, was a politic stroke; the apprehensions of a great many were appeased;

Elizabeth. fed; and the ferment about the Duke of Anjou subsided. The alliance, they said, had threatened ruin to the Protestant Religion.—Few years passed afterwards without the execution of one or more Churchmen of the Catholic persuasion. They were held out to the people as traitors; and such indeed they were; for the laws had now declared the profession of their religion to be Treason against the State.

The next designs, of a seditious nature, with which Catholics were charged, were of being concerned in Babington's plot in the year 1586, and in the great Spanish Armament two years after.—A few Gentlemen, about fourteen in number, of moderate fortunes, and of some interest in their neighbourhood, fired at the ignominious treatment, which the amiable Mary had so long experienced from the hands of Elizabeth, resolved to attempt the rescue of the Captive Queen. There was one priest in the conspiracy. Walsingham was well apprised of their whole scheme, and he had his spies amongst them sedulously employed to urge on the execution. When the plot was ripe for discovery, it was not difficult to seize the delinquents: Their names,

Walsingham got up the whole plot —

names, haunts, and places of abode were all known to the Minister. At their examination they were charged with the design of attempting to release the Scottish Queen, encouraging an invasion, and assassinating their Sovereign. They were condemned and executed.—The Duke of Norfolk, a Protestant, had some years before engaged in a similar project, as far at least as it regarded the release of Mary, whom he loved. He also had suffered.—If we except the conspirators themselves, no other Catholics were engaged in the plot, or at all acquainted with it; yet occasion was taken to put the laws against them into severer execution. Mary herself was soon after brought to the block, and Elizabeth was freed from a hated rival. Her chief guilt was flagrant: She was in possession of some personal charms, which nature had denied to the English Queen. Mary had a finer shape; her countenance was more expressive; and her step in dancing, it is said, was more graceful. Elizabeth could not brook this partial indulgence of nature: the sceptre of England was hardly worth possessing, if she were not also thought the Queen of Beauty. Mary had no other crime; for surely it could

Elizabeth.

*no - her
flagrant guilt -
was in being
the right full
heir to the
Crown*

Elizabeth. could be no crime, after twenty years severe confinement, to have concerted with Babington the best measures for the recovery of her liberty! If the Conspirators had really formed any design of seizing and of assassinating their own Sovereign, which I do not think they ever did, it was undoubtedly flagitious; but scarcely more so, than was the design of Elizabeth and her friends against the life of Mary of Scotland. At all events, how could Catholics be charged with an attempt, in which they had no concern? As well might the Protestants of England have been accused of treasonable practices, because a Duke of their religion, with some associates of the same persuasion, had embarked in a scheme, which had been construed into treason. Norfolk wished to deliver, and then to present his hand to Mary; the less interested Babington had no views but to rescue her from captivity. And this was a crime for which the Catholics of England were to be devoted to destruction!

In regard to the intended invasion from Spain, we were, if possible, still less concerned than in the plot just mentioned.

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The Conspirators were Catholics : But Elizabeth. the *Invincible Armada* had no claim to their friendship ; unless, because Catholics professed the religion of the invaders, they must be supposed to have abetted their design. The Spanish *Manifesto* declares the motives of this expedition : It was to chastise the English for the assistance they had given to the rebels in the Netherlands ; to retaliate for the many depredations committed by them on the coasts of Spain and America ; and to revenge the insult which had been offered to the dignity of all crowned heads by the barbarous murder of Mary Queen of Scots. Some views of a religious tendency might also have intervened, but they constituted no leading object. To the English Catholics no application had been made for their concurrence ; on the contrary, the Spanish Monarch refused to employ those few Catholic soldiers of fortune who were then in his dominions ; for though they eat their bread from his table, he durst not, he said, trust them in any attempt against England. Yet did this formidable expedition prove more unfortunate to the Catholic party, than it did to the English nation. Providence conspiring

Elizabeth. conspiring with British valour, the Armada was sunk and dissipated; when Elizabeth, in imitation of those ancient nations, I suppose, who delighted in the practice, resolved to return thanks to the Deity in a sacrifice of human victims. The Catholics were ordered over to a general prosecution; great numbers were imprisoned, and above forty Priests were publicly butchered in several parts of the kingdom; whilst the pulpit and the press were employed in representing them as the authors and abettors of the intended invasion. I have before me a faithful narrative of the trials of those who suffered; and if any confidence can be placed in the solemn protestations of dying men, I venture to declare, there was not the smallest guilt amongst them.

On all these public occasions, the English Catholics being clear from any imputation of real guilt, the attempts of particular persons, either against the Queen or her government, cannot, with the least semblance of equity, be laid to their charge. Hard indeed would be the fate of mankind, if whole societies were made answerable for the criminal conduct of a few

D . . . severest

Elizabeth. severest penalties. To receive the order of Priesthood abroad, to exercise any spiritual functions in her Majesty's dominions, to be reconciled to the ancient faith, or even to assist in such a reconciliation, were by an English parliament, at the end of the sixteenth century, constituted acts of high treason against the state!—Such, in a general view, were the laws framed against Catholics in a Protestant country; yet I will take it upon me to assert that, during the long period of forty four years, whilst Elizabeth, to the great political glory of England, swayed the Sceptre, her Popish subjects, though oppressed and persecuted, were not guilty of *one act* of treason, sedition, or rebellion.

I have taken no notice of the famous Bull of Pius the Fifth, which excommunicated Elizabeth, and absolved her subjects from their allegiance, because it was never accepted by the English Catholics; nor was it ever signified to them in any legal or canonical manner: It had not therefore the least influence on their conduct. They universally acknowledged her title; prayed for her; fought for her;

her ; and upon every occasion were ready Elizabeth.
 to support her dignity and defend her
civil rights. They only did not think
 her the *spiritual* head of their church.—
 The power of deposing Princes which
 Pius assumed, and which other Pontiffs
 had before him often exercised, was a
 part of that prerogative, which arrogant
 ambition had usurped, and which, for a
 long time, the weakness or ignorance of
 mankind durst not infringe. Purer no-
 tions of religion, and improved politics,
 have now taught the See of Rome more
 moderation and better maxims.

IN 1603, James the First was called James I.
 to the throne of England. This was an
 event which the Catholics had long ar-
 dently wished for, and on it they had
 built the most sanguine expectations.
 From the natural mildness of his temper,
 from the favours he had received from
 Catholic Princes, and from a recollection,
 which was not effaced, of the warm at-
 tachment they had ever shewn for his mo-
 ther, they certainly had reason to expect
 more humane treatment and some marks of
 indulgence. James was a friend to tole-
 D 2 ration ;

James I. ration; he wished to conciliate all parties; he had studied religion; and he well knew, from repeated trials of their untractable humour, that he had much more to fear from the Disciples of Calvin, than from the Catholics of any country. The doctrines of those men had now acquired an extensive influence; and the established Church began already to feel their impression. "Let men be punished for actions, said he, and not for opinions." It was a just observation, but it gave offence. The ruling party alone thought they had a claim to protection.—The English Ministry were aware of his favourable disposition to Catholics, and they strove to avert its effects. He was therefore prevailed on, soon after his arrival, to issue a proclamation for banishing all Jesuits and Seminary Priests; and a statute was also enacted, ordering the penal laws of Elizabeth to be put in execution. It is, however, well known that he did not mean things should proceed to extremities. The Stuarts had not in their composition one fibre of that stern texture, which had marked the Tudor race of Kings;

Kings; but it was no easy task to manage the testy humour of the nation. James I.

Great was the disappointment of the Catholic party, when they saw at once all their bright schemes of happiness dashed in pieces, and themselves again exposed to severity and oppression. The King, they saw, however well disposed, either wanted fortitude or power to befriend them; and the Puritans, from whom they had every thing to dread, were daily gaining strength and energy. Nothing therefore remained but to resign themselves to a fate they could not avert; and to this they silently submitted.

In every society will be found men of restless dispositions, of desperate fortunes, and of daring character. Such there now were amongst the Catholics; and by them was concerted one of the most determined, but most wild and nefarious schemes, ever heard of in the annals of any nation. This was the *gunpowder plot*: By which, had it succeeded, the King and both houses of parliament had been destroyed at one blow. The fifth of November, 1605, the third year of his

James I. his Majesty's reign, was the day appointed for its execution. Providence again singularly interfered, and the nation was saved from so dreadful a catastrophe.

We now know, from Stat. papers only last year - 1894 discovered that the truth was very different - the plot was fostered if not altogether planned & set up, by Cecil - & Cateley, Jackson &c. were mere dupes in his hands

The spirit of desperation, or of complete wickedness, seems alone to have planned this grand scheme of destruction. In no part are discoverable any views of policy; no project of a revolution had been formed; no foreign invasion was ready to second their attempts; their own party, that is, the party of Catholics, was not apprised; nor had they prepared any one measure for further operations. The Conspirators, when most numerous, including their servants, did not exceed eighty; and above twenty Catholic Peers sat, at that time, in the upper house, who surely were not acquainted with the design. A report had indeed been privately circulated, that something, they knew not what, was in agitation for the good of Catholicity.—If the Conspirators really intended to serve their brethren, never was there a more misjudged project: For, in either case, of success or detection, their ruin was inevitable.—It has been by some thought

thought that the enemies to the Catholics, James I. apprehensive of the King's favourable dispositions to them, had a principal hand in the plot; and that Cecil well understood its whole rise and progress. So much at least is certain, that no event would have happened so agreeable to the views of their enemies, or so dreadfully fatal to the Catholic cause. Its effects are very sensibly felt to this day. A feast was politically instituted to perpetuate its memory; to the Catholics was imputed its whole atrocity: nor has the fullest evidence of their innocence contributed to wipe off the foul aspersions; or their most solemn protestations been able to remove the imputation, that they are prone to sedition, foes to public tranquillity, and fond of blood. Yet the moderate part of the nation, which unfortunately was but small, did not then think them guilty; and the King, in his proclamation for apprehending the Conspirators, declares it to have been the design only of a few desperate men.

The hatred of the nation against Catholics now knew no bounds; and nothing but the utter extinction of that devoted party seemed capable of satisfying their rage.

James I. rage. James alone, with a becoming resolution, though it was not his usual conduct, rejected all measures of violence, and was the protector of innocence. Yet again he consented to new laws against *Popish Recusants*, which are those of the third of James. I am shocked at the view of such infamous proceedings; nor do I wish to disguise my feelings. A few miscreants had engaged in an infamous confederacy, in which the multitude had no participation, and which they execrated; yet are the latter also punished, and handed down to posterity in the darkest colours of guilt!

Two years after this wretched event, with a view to ascertain the real sentiments of Catholics, (at least in the intentions of the King) a scheme was set on foot, which seemed well calculated to answer the purpose. An *oath of allegiance*, it was said, would be a proper test of the sincerity of their declarations. An oath was consequently prepared; but it was drawn up in terms, either from design or ignorance, which were likely to raise difficulties, and to perplex the tender consciences of the best disposed. If ministry meant it, their
views

views were completely answered. — It James I.
 should seem, as if they who framed it (a
 shrewd Priest and Archbishop Bancroft)
 well knew where principally lay the point
 of nicety ; and that they wished rather to
 divide, than to conciliate, the party. As
 soon as it was proposed, great disputes arose
 about the lawfulness of the oath : By some
 it was approved, and taken, whilst others,
 equally well inclined in their political sen-
 timents, considered it as insidiously worded,
 and as bearing hard on tenets, in which
 they thought religion was concerned. The
 Nonjurors, who were far most numerous,
 were by these means exposed to daily vexa-
 tions ; and occasion was given for misre-
 presenting them as disaffected persons,
 whose professions of attachment to the
 civil establishment were not to be trusted.
 Appearances, in the eye of the nation,
 were now certainly against them ; but it
 is a truth, that no people could be more
 firmly attached to King and Government,
 than Catholics then were ; but they were
 disturbed with difficulties, which at this
 time make no impression. To complete
 the business, the Roman Pontiff, ever jea-
 lous of any attack on his supposed prero-
 gative, very inopportunately interfered, and
 E wholly

James I. wholly frustrated a scheme, the success of which, delicacy of conscience alone had at first obstructed.

During the remaining part of this reign, no material alteration took place in the affairs of Catholics. No new severities were practised, or laws enacted, against them; but those already made were occasionally put in execution; for I have before me a list of thirteen Priests who were hanged for the exercise of their sacerdotal functions. Every attempt the King made to mitigate the severity of these laws, or to give relief to his Catholic subjects, was loudly opposed, and he was accused of being very improperly disposed to favour them.—Whilst the marriage treaty betwixt his Son and the Infanta of Spain was going on, in the year 1623, some secret articles were proposed, and James seemed determined to prosecute his favourite plan for general toleration. This, however, was warmly opposed by Abbot and others of the Puritanical faction; and as the treaty soon broke off, the Catholics were unrelieved.—In this year a flaming petition, from both houses of parliament, against *Popish Recusants*, was presented to the

the King, praying for the most active execution of the laws against them. They had been charged with no new crime; but James had allowed them to breathe with some liberty, and this, in their estimation, was too great an indulgence. "Such an execution of justice, said they, will much advance the glory of Almighty God." These men should have been High Priests to Moloch, in the vale of Hinnom. The King saw into the spirit which had dictated this petition. He answered by professing his warmest attachment to the Protestant religion; that he would cautiously guard against any undue relaxation of the laws; but that "like a good horseman, he must be allowed sometimes to use the reins, and not always the spurs.—I am an enemy, continued he, to persecution; and have ever thought that no way more increased any religion than persecution; sanguis martyrum est semen Ecclesiæ."—James was a divine as well as a politician. He died the year following.

Charles I.

ON the accession of Charles, the Catholics were again in some expectation of ease, from his marriage with Henrietta, Princess of France. She was daughter to the great and good Henry the Fourth, and had been educated in a court which had long experienced the direful effects of religious discord. It was therefore hoped she might bring peace to the contending factions of England. Apprehensive of so enviable an event, the jealousy of the Puritans was roused to a more active exertion. These were the men who now began to take the lead in all public affairs; and the young King's court, says Burnet, was full of them. They demanded the execution of the penal laws. A proclamation to this effect was issued; and, in the year 1627, a severe statute was enacted, conformable to the first of James, repeating the prohibition of foreign education. Certain officers, named *Pursuivants*, were likewise appointed, who had almost an unlimited power to enter the houses of Catholics, and to distress them at will. The most groundless rumours were raised, and industriously circulated. The Papists, it was said, were forming, I know not what plot,

plot, against the King and Archbishop Charles I.
 Laud; they were creating a misunderstanding betwixt his Majesty and the parliament; and they were instigating the Scots to attempt the ruin of the established Church! These were bold calumnies; but they had their effect: For, under this disguise, the real promoters of sedition were screened from observation, whilst the guilt was ascribed to a party, which had been long the object of popular odium. The Puritans thus played an artful game: Had they made an open attack on Church and State, the nation might have taken a timely alarm; but conducting their deep scheme under the show of opposing the encroachments of Popery, their success was certain. The friends to Charles and to their country saw, at last, the full tendency of these machinations; but it was then too late to stem the raging torrent.—In this manner, during the sixteen first years of his Majesty's reign, was the kingdom perpetually harassed with the cry of *Popery*; and no situation could be more distressing than that of the Catholics. Guilty of no one crime, they were accused of all. Some consolation indeed they might draw
 from

Charles I. from the reflexion, that as they were principally hated by the ruling faction, it was obvious they were well affected to the King, and friends to religion and virtue.

When the rebellion began, though now there was little want of disguise, yet the same methods were invariably practised. Pym, at the opening of the Long Parliament in the year 1640, among the grievances which he enumerated, complained loudly of the suspension of the laws against Popery; and among other acts of royal power, which this Parliament soon assumed, they issued orders for demolishing all images, altars, and crucifixes. It was the crown, however, and the mitre which these zealous men principally aimed at. Crosses were then removed from the streets and markets; and no two pieces of wood or stone, says an ingenious writer, were permitted to lie quietly over each other at right angles. Alarms of the most shocking nature were propagated: Meetings, it was reported, were held by the Papists in immense caves in Surrey. These caves did not exist, but the belief of them was the same.

A Plot of a singular tendency was devised: London and Westminster were to sink in one common ruin. The Papists, therefore, had laid vast trains of gunpowder to blow up the Thames. Fortunately the powder got wet, and the lives of his Majesty's Protestant subjects were saved from destruction!—When the King went down to the house to demand the five members he had accused of treason, this breach of privilege, as it was called, was ascribed to the bloody counsels of Papists. And when, a few days after, he retired to Hampton-Court, a petition from the apprentices and porters warned the house of the danger to which their religion was exposed; whilst a brewer's wife, followed by many thousands of her sex, also brought up a petition, expressing in the strongest language their terrors of Popery!

When the royal army took the field, the cry of Popery was echoed through the kingdom. “His Majesty, said the Rebels in their declaration, seduced by wicked counsellors, has raised a great army of Papists to destroy the parliament, and to bring in Popery and Tyranny.”

The

Charles I. The Catholics indeed were firm in the royal cause; but their personal services were not accepted, till such time as the parliament had itself offered them commissions in their own army. This being known, Charles disregarding all further imputation of being popishly inclined, invited them to his standard. They received commissions to raise companies and regiments. This they did at their own expence, bringing along with them their sons, tenants, and neighbours: Nor, from the fight at Edgehill till the day of the *restoration*, did they ever desert the royal party.—I have now before me a list of six Lieutenant-Generals, eighteen Colonels, sixteen Lieutenant-Colonels, sixteen Majors, sixty nine Captains, fourteen Lieutenants, five Cornets, and fifty Gentlemen Volunteers, of the Catholic persuasion, who lost their lives in defence of his Majesty and of the established constitution in Church and State. The severest oppression, to which, for almost a century, they had been constantly exposed, had not been able to extinguish in their breasts the spirit of real patriotism.

After

After the fatal defeat at Worcester, in 1651, when all the royal party was either killed, taken, or dispersed, the young Charles was successively, for the space of six whole days, in the hands of more than fifty Catholics, not one of whom, either from fear of punishment or from prospect of gain, could be prevailed on to betray their Prince. Yet many of these were in very low condition. The name of Pendrel will be ever memorable in the annals of Loyalty.

Charles I.

THE Commonwealth being established, (as by the subversion of the regal and episcopal order, the grand object of pursuit, was finally settled) the cry against Popery seemed to subside, and the Catholics became confounded in the common mass of those who were thought enemies to the new form of government. What they now suffered was more on account of loyalty than of religion. To conciliate the affections of all men was with Cromwell a leading object; he well knew it was only by such means that his usurped authority could stand. Though no step could have proved more disagreeable to the enthusiasm of his party; yet it appears he had serious

The Commonwealth.

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thoughts

The Com-
monwealth.

thoughts of granting a general toleration in religion. Had he done so, and then supported his measures with all that firmness of which he was master, perhaps the Commonwealth of England might have stood to this day. Cromwell had a conference with some few of the Catholic persuasion; they were unauthorized, I find, by their brethren; but, induced by the general aspect of affairs, they thought it good policy to make the best provision for themselves. Sincerity was not one of the Protector's virtues; at all events, he required from those Gentlemen such oaths and engagements, as they were not inclined to accept. In the general body of Catholics there ever remained a stern spirit of loyalty, which no threats or allurements could vanquish. The Protestants of the same faction were equally steady. Yet by some writers Catholics have been represented as deserters from the cause: It has been said, they made their court to the Usurper. It was the wish, perhaps, of these men to screen, if possible, what they thought the wrong behaviour of some of their own friends, by criminating the innocent. Even Clarendon very roundly insinuates the same charge against the Catholics.

tholics. I am confident he knew it was not so, at least in an extensive application: But it should seem, as if the noble author were jealous that the praise of loyalty, of which himself had so ample a share, should be given to a party, whom he never liked. It is not from any romantic ideas of the virtue of loyalty that I say this; for I really think that Catholics, as matters then stood, would have done well to have joined the Protector, had he given them certain assurances of support. They had experienced how little was to be expected from the bounty of Kings; and besides, with the approbation of the major part of the nation, the form of government was altered; consequently the criminality of rebellion was done away. My views then in representing the uniform adhesion of Catholics to King Charles rests solely on the conviction of its truth. In other respects, I am not ashamed to say, that the government which is best inclined to give us protection, has the only right to demand our allegiance.

The Commonwealth,

Charles II.

AT the *Restoration*, in the year 1660, an august and splendid scene opened upon the nation, in the blessings of which Catholics had again reason to expect a participation. It was the King's first wish to grant indulgence to the Protestant Dissenters. This he had solemnly promised before his embarkation for England: he had besides much reason to fear the turbulence of their minds, unless it should be appeased by some favourable concessions. The parliament, now outrageously loyal, opposed every attempt for their relief: They wished to see the Church of England restored to its primitive splendor; and they wished to cast down the aspiring thoughts of the Sectaries. Charles, however, from motives of the best policy, was determined to be their friend.

Nothing was at first done for the Catholics; yet their pretensions were great, and they seemed to look for a proportionable indulgence. "It was the King's desire, says Clarendon, which he never dissembled, to give them ease from all the sanguinary laws." Without importunity or complaint, had they patiently waited this event, they might possibly have soon recovered

recovered all the common privileges of Charles II. subjects. “ For, adds my noble author, that gracious disposition in the King to his Catholic subjects, did not then appear ingrateful to any.” But the vanity and presumption of some of them was great; they seized every opportunity of extolling their own loyalty; and they spoke of their sufferings in the Royal Cause as deserving of more than common notice. It is true, as I have already observed, they had done much. His Lordship even owns, that some of those, who had suffered most for his father, did send supplies to the King when he was abroad; “ though, says he, they were hardly able to provide necessaries for themselves.”

An address being made to the House of Peers, the year after the Restoration, for some relaxation of the laws against them, a committee of that house was appointed to examine and to report all those penal statutes, which reached to the taking away the life of any Catholic for his religion: “ There not appearing one Lord in the house, who seemed to be unwilling that those laws should be repealed.” After the committee was appointed, the Catholic Lords and
their

Charles II. their friends, for some days, diligently attended it, and made their observations on several acts of parliament, in which they desired ease. “ But on a sudden this committee was discontinued, and never after revived ; the Roman Catholics never afterwards being solicitous for it.”

The truth is, they very soon quarrelled amongst themselves. The Lords and men of estates, little anxious about the abolition of laws, which concerned principally the lives of Priests, desired rather a repeal of those, whereby their own property, as Recusants, was affected. The churchmen, on the other hand, were not much solicitous about the removal of laws, by which sometimes they might gain the glory of martyrdom, whilst they continued under restraints more grievous far than death.—A committee was then chosen from among themselves of the superiors of all orders, and of the secular Clergy. They met at Arundell House, along with some of the principal Lords and Gentlemen. Here also disputes soon began, and they disagreed about the form of an oath or subscription, which it was intended should be made or taken by all Catholics.

Catholics. A proposition had likewise Charles II.
 been made, that none but secular Priests
 should be tolerated in England, who
 should be under a Bishop and a settled
 form of government; and that all the
 regulars, in particular all Jesuits, should
 be, under the strictest penalties, forbidden
 the kingdom. The committee, as was
 natural to expect, was dissolved, and met
 no more.

From this time, owing to the impru-
 dence of some, and the insolence of others,
 as also from that rooted dislike which
 the nation had not lost, Catholics again
 became common objects of aversion.
 They were regarded with an eye of pecu-
 liar jealousy from that known propen-
 sion, which the King felt and ever ex-
 pressed for them. Herein at least can
 be discovered no symptom of that un-
 grateful disposition, which, is said, so
 strongly to have marked the character of
 Charles. In his declaration for liberty
 of conscience to the Dissenters in 1662,
 he says, "It is divulged, through the
 kingdom, that we are highly indulgent to
 Papists, not only in exempting them
 from the penalties of the law, but even
 to

Charles II. to such a degree of countenance and encouragement as may endanger the Protestant Religion.—It is true that, as we shall always, according to our justice, retain, so we think it may become us, to avow to the world the due sense we have, of the *greatest part* of our Catholic subjects of this kingdom, having deserved well of our royal father, of blessed memory, and from us, and *even from the Protestant Religion itself*, in adhering to us with their lives and fortunes, for the maintenance of our crown in the religion established, against those who, under the name of zealous Protestants, employed both fire and sword to overthrow them both.—Such are the capital laws in force against them, as that, though justified in their rigour by the times wherein they were made, we profess it would be grievous to us to consent to the execution of them, by putting any of our subjects to death for their opinion in matters of religion only.—But if, upon our expressing (according to Christian charity) our dislike of bloodshed for religion, and our gracious intentions to our Roman Catholic subjects, Priests shall take the boldness to appear, and avow themselves,

to the offence and scandal of good Protestants, and of the laws in force against them; they shall quickly find, we know as well to be severe, when wisdom requires it, as indulgent, when charity and sense of merit challenge it from us." This declaration, the most zealous Protestant must allow, is replete with good sense, and breathes that spirit of justice and love of order, which should ever animate the breasts of Princes: It also shews in what light the King considered the services he had received from his Catholic subjects.

In his speech to parliament, the year following, he again says, "The truth is, I am in my nature an enemy to all severity for religion and conscience, how mistaken soever it be, when it extends to capital and sanguinary punishments, which I am told began in Popish times. Therefore, when I say this, I hope I shall not need to warn any here, not to infer from thence, I mean to favour Popery. I must confess to you, there are many of that profession, who, having served my father, and myself very well, may fairly hope for some part of that indulgence, I

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would

Charles II. would willingly afford to others, who dissent from us. But let me explain myself, lest some mistake me herein, as I hear they did in my declaration. I am far from meaning by this a toleration, or qualifying them thereby to hold any offices or places in the government. Nay farther, I desire some laws may be made to hinder the growth and progress of their doctrines."—In consequence of the last clause, a petition was presented from both houses that he would issue a proclamation, commanding all Jesuits and Priests to depart the kingdom by a day, under pain of having the penalties of the laws inflicted on them. To this the King consented.

The next year, 1664, a design was formed, which came from the King himself, of bringing a bill into parliament, seriously meant to serve the Catholics, by putting them on that footing of ease and security, which their conduct, as good subjects, he thought merited. Measures of ascertaining their numbers had been previously taken, that the most violent might know there was nothing to be feared from so inconsiderable a body. He wished

wished also that a distinction should be made betwixt those, who, being of ancient extraction, had continued of the same religion from father to son, and those who became Profelytes to the Catholic Church. In the new bill it was intended to provide against such changes in religion. The King had likewise resolved to contract and lessen the number of Priests, and to reduce them into such order, that he might himself know all their names, and their several places of residence in the kingdom. "This measure, says Clarendon, must have produced such a security to those who stayed, and to those with whom they stayed, as would have set them free from any apprehension of any penalties imposed by preceding parliaments."—But this design, which comprehended many other particulars, from the perverse opposition of some weak heads of the party, vanished as soon as it was discovered. Moderate men, who desired nothing but the exercise of their religion in great secrecy, and a suspension of the laws, were cruelly disappointed, and in their conferences with the King often complained "of the folly and vanity of some of their friends, and more

Charles II. particularly of the presumption of the Jesuits." All further thoughts of the bill were now dropt, nor was there ever after mention of it.

From this view it may be justly inferred, that the Catholics at that time were their own greatest enemies. The King was decidedly their friend; the Courtiers, sunk in ease and luxury, laughed at all religion, and only wished to humour their Prince; the friends to Episcopacy and Monarchy, that is, the established Church, were not much inclined to oppose a party, who, they knew, would be ever ready to join them against the encroachments of the Sectaries; the Dissenters themselves, tho' enemies to the name of Catholic, now dared not speak out, whilst themselves were waiting redress from the crown; and the nation at large, just breathing from the horrors of civil commotions, wished not to be again exposed to the view of discord and contention. In such circumstances, nothing, it seems, could obstruct their prospects of success, but vain pretensions, immoderate confidence, precipitate counsels, imprudent zeal, or that animosity and internal discord, which must ever frustrate the best-con-

certed

certed plans. These were unfortunate evils; but they are the evils attendant on weak human nature: They were misfortunes which affected very sensibly the Catholic interest, but they had no immediate reference to the state. In allegiance, politics, and patriotism, the Catholics were steady, generous, and sincere. Charles II.

In 1666, an event happened, which finally contributed to blast all their hopes, though Catholics were no otherwise concerned in it, than as sufferers, or as spectators sympathising in the general scene of misery and distress. The great fire of London was this event, and it was ascribed to the Papists. They had long acquired an exclusive claim to the infamy of every national calamity. Not the smallest proof of guilt was then adduced against them; but their crimes wanted not the useless formalities of proof. It was by some, however, given to Dutch or to French machinations, with equal semblance of truth. Clarendon, who was witness to the whole, ascribes it to the just judgment of Heaven, provoked by the general depravity of the nation. In common language, every moderate man considered it as accidental.

But

Charles II. But the Magistracy of London, who are always wiser than the rest of mankind, saw into the whole transaction; and on a lying monument, raised where the fire began, with the greatest humanity ascribed it solely to the Papists. The noble pile to this day rears its head, an irrefragable argument of the blind credulity of the times!

The rumour of this calumny was but a prelude to many others, which easily found credit in a jealous and exasperated nation. A year now scarcely passed, in which some peculiar guilt was not imputed to Catholics. The public odium being again roused was easily kept alive; and the designs of bad men were answered. In 1670, the enemies to the court, who were greatly increased, publicly asserted that the King was now finally resolved to annul the constitution; that he aimed at arbitrary power, with a view of destroying the liberties of the people; and that he meant to subvert the established Church by an unlimited toleration of Popery. This was the magic wand, alone capable of realizing so momentous a design. The cabinet council, distinguished by the appellation

pellation of the *Cabal*, which Charles Charles II. soon after chose, was indeed well calculated to give plausibility to these reports. They were not Catholics, (Clifford excepted) but they were the most dangerous Ministry that England perhaps ever knew. The Duke of York, with an imprudence that became his character, was, at the same time, far too open in declaring his religious sentiments. To give the last alarm to the fears of the nation, a formal liberty of conscience was allowed to all Sectaries. "This indulgence, says the King in his declaration, as to the allowance of public places of worship, and approbation of their Preachers, shall extend to all sorts of non-conformists and recusants, excepting to the recusants of the Roman Catholic religion; to whom we shall in nowise allow public places of worship, but only indulge them in their share in the common exemption from the execution of the penal laws, and the exercise of their worship in private houses only." Against this indulgence, in itself so just and reasonable, the parliament remonstrated, and the King was at last compelled to recal his declaration. The un-

Charles II. unpopular conduct of the Ministry had raised a spirit of opposition, which would not be satisfied.

It is worth notice that, somewhat previous to the time I am speaking of, commenced the first secret money treaty between Louis XIV. and Charles; wherein it was stipulated that the latter should receive two hundred thousand pounds, for declaring himself a Catholic, and that France should assist him with troops, if his subjects rebelled. There were other articles of a nature equally singular. The destruction of Holland, in which England was to assist, was Louis's object. The Lords Clifford, and Arundel of Wardour, both Catholics, with Lord Arlington, a man well-affected to that religion, were appointed commissioners to transact this shameful business.—The year following, 1671, a similar treaty was concluded by Charles's Protestant Ministers, Buckingham, Ashley Cooper, and Lauderdale, who knew nothing of the first, excepting the article of the King's conversion, which, however, was secretly retained, this was a repetition of the former treaty.—Charles's views were only
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to get money; he was little solicitous about religion; and it is curious to see how artfully he afterwards evaded his promise of conversion.—These connexions with France were of the most fatal tendency, and the Royal Brothers, with all their Ministers, deserved to lose their heads.—From this time French money was largely distributed; and even the popular party, it is well known, entered into connexions with that nation, of a nature almost as dangerous as those which the Court is supposed to have formed against the religion and liberties of the subject.—Few parties in this kingdom are free from blame: In their turns, Whigs and Tories have been equally enemies to their country, when their passions and their interests misled them. “When I found, says Sir John Dalrymple, in the French dispatches, Lord Russell intriguing with the court of Versailles, and Algernon Sidney taking money from it, I felt very near the same shock, as if I had seen a son turn his back in the day of battle.”—But to return.

Having gained this point, parliament proceeded further, and resolved to make

Charles II. the conformity in religious principles still more general. A law therefore passed, in 1673, intitled the *Test Act*, imposing an oath on all who should accept any public office. Besides the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, they were to receive the sacrament once a year in the established Church, and to abjure all belief in the doctrine of Transubstantiation. Peers were not included in this act; but if Papists, and held places by inheritance, they were obliged to appoint deputies.—The relation betwixt civil allegiance and a belief purely religious, is not, surely, very discoverable; but the object of this act was sufficiently obvious. It incapacitated every man from the service of his country, whose conscience should not be ductile enough to sacrifice his religion at the shrine of interest or of some paltry preferment.

The general disquietudes about religion did not however subside, and the people were instructed to consider the alliance, which had been made with France, as a fresh design for the introduction of Popery. The clouds began to thicken round the heads of Catholics. The nation

was

was on tiptoe expecting some frightful event. Yet I cannot be prevailed on to think, it was at that unimportant body that were principally aimed the machinations of designing men. That same spirit, inimical to regal government, began again to move, which had for some time lain dormant, but had never been extinguished. In the breasts of others the horror of Popery was perhaps the sole actuating motive. But it was equally good policy in both to keep alive the popular apprehension. Charles would not depart from his favourite system of general moderation; it became therefore necessary to rouse him into action, and to this end the old stratagem of a *Plot* was thought the most efficacious measure. When the bad humours of Englishmen are once afloat, they must either have objects of suspicion on which to spend themselves, or they will make them.

The plot, which the infamous Mr. Titus Oates has honoured with his name, was broached in August, 1678. This man had discovered the secrets of a deep conspiracy, in which, it was represented, the Jesuits had a leading concern. They

Charles II.

had held several meetings, both abroad and in England, the final determination of which was to kill the King by poison, the gun, or a dagger. The glaring inconsistencies which crowded the narrative of this whole affair made no impression on a credulous public. It was their wish it might be true; and never was nation worked up to a higher pitch of foolish infatuation. Moderate men began to apprehend a general massacre of the whole Catholic body. Two events indeed accompanied the first opening of this plot, which contributed to give it some air of probability. These were the discovery of some letters of Coleman, Secretary to the Duke of York, and the death of Sir Edmond Godfrey. The letters were imprudent, and contained expressions about the introduction of Popery, which at this time were easily susceptible of further construction. The real truth is, Coleman was a weak and bigoted man, who wished to give a spread to his religion, but that only, as he declared on his trial, by procuring a free toleration for Catholics.—Godfrey's murder has never been cleared up; he was an active Justice of the Peace, and from a coincidence of his death with
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the supposed discovery of the plot, the Charles II.
Papists were charged with it. "There are seasons of believing, says Burnet, as well as of disbelieving; and believing was then so much in season, that improbabilities or inconsistencies were little considered. Nor was it safe so much as to make reflections on them. Oates, and Bedloe, another witness for the plot, continues the Bishop, by their behaviour, detracted more from their own credit, than all their enemies could have done. The former talked of all persons with an insufferable insolence; and the other was a scandalous libertine in his whole deportment."

The King, from the beginning, was almost the only person who treated the plot, as ascribed to Catholics, with becoming contempt. He saw through that dark veil, which the fascinated multitude were unable to penetrate; whilst his Ministers stood all aghast, and either partook, or affected to partake of the general consternation. It was expected the parliament would repress these delusions, and would aim to call back the nation to reason and deliberate enquiry. But they manifested even greater credulity than
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Charles II. the vulgar. The cry of *Plot* was echoed from one house to the other: The enemies to the crown would not let slip so favourable an opportunity of managing the passions of the people; and the court-party were afraid of being thought disloyal, should they seem to controvert the reality of the plot, or doubt the guilt of the pretended assassins of their King. "I would not, said a noble Lord, have so much as a Popish man or a Popish woman to remain amongst us, not so much as a Popish dog, or a Popish bitch, not so much as a Popish cat to mew, or pur about our King." This was sublime eloquence, and it was received with bursts of applause.—The Commons voted that the Papists designed to kill the King. Warrants were issued out, and many of that persuasion were apprehended. They were tried, convicted on the evidence of some of the worst men the earth ever bore, and executed. At death they still protested their innocence; a circumstance, says Mr. Hume, which made no impression on the spectators; their being Jesuits banished even pity from their sufferings. This frightful persecution continued for some time, and the King, contrary

trary to his own judgment, was obliged Charles II. to give way to the popular fury.—“ I waited often on him, says Burnet, all the month of December. He came to me to Chiffinch’s, a page of the backstairs, and kept the time he assigned me to a minute. He was alone, and talked much, and very freely with me. We agreed in one thing, that the greatest part of the evidence was a contrivance. But he suspected some had set on Oates, and instructed him; and he named the Earl of Shaftesbury. I was of another mind. I thought the many gross things in his narrative shewed, there was no abler head than Oates, or Tongue, in framing it: and Oates, in his first story, had covered the Duke, and the Ministers so much, that from thence it seemed clear that Lord Shaftesbury had no hand in it, who hated them much more than he did Popery. He fancied there was a design of rebellion on foot. I assured him, I saw no appearances of it. I told him, there was a report breaking out, that he intended to legitimate the Duke of Monmouth. He answered quick, that, as well as he loved him, he had rather see him hanged. Yet he apprehended a rebellion

Charles II. bellion so much, that he seemed not ill-pleased that the party should flatter themselves with that imagination, hoping that would keep them quiet in a dependence upon himself."—In the judgment of these two, it appears, how little the Catholics were concerned in this plot.

"It has been much doubted, says an author of great information, whether Shaftesbury contrived this plot, or if he only made use of it, after it broke out. Some papers I have seen convince me he contrived it, though the persons he made use of as informers ran beyond their instructions. The common objection to the supposition of his contriving the plot, is, the absurdity of its circumstances. When Shaftesbury himself was pressed with regard to that absurdity, he made an answer which shews equally the irregularity and the depth of his genius.—"It is no matter, said he, the more nonsensical the better; if we cannot bring them to swallow worse nonsense than that, we shall never do any good with them."

Catholic Peers were now excluded from sitting in the house, by a bill brought into

into parliament, requiring all members of either house, and all such as might come into the King's court, or presence, to take a test against Popery; in which not only Transubstantiation is renounced, but the invocation of the Virgin Mary and the Saints is declared to be idolatrous. This bill was principally levelled against the Duke of York; but he had interest enough to get himself excepted by a proviso annexed to it. Five of those Peers to whom the Pope, as Mr. Oates informed the public, had granted commissions to act as his ministers in England, had been sent to the Tower. Of these the Earl of Stafford, his Holiness's Paymaster-General, was alone executed; and at the death of this aged Nobleman the sternest countenances were seen to drop tears.

The new parliament of the succeeding year did not depart from the steps of their predecessors; and as the popular phrenzy seemed to abate, fresh means were devised for keeping up the alarm; mobs, petitions, and Pope-burnings were every day practised. The number of informing miscreants still encreased; the business was found to be not only lucrative, but

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Charles II. honourable. Plot was set up against plot, all of them under-parts of the same grand drama; and the minds of the nation were suspended in dreadful apprehension. This parliament also, to testify their loyalty, or to convince the world that they would not surrender the palm of infatuation, came to a resolution, "That if the King should come to any violent death, they will revenge it to the utmost on the Papists." A Papist only, in their judgment, had power to take away the life of a King! They did not probably recollect who had struck off the head of his late Majesty. The hand of every wretch was now armed with a dagger, by which he might at once destroy his Prince and extirpate Popery.

All this time Shaftesbury and his associates were labouring at their grand design; this was, to exclude the Duke of York from the throne, and to bring in the bastard Monmouth. The Duke was a Catholic: could it therefore be proved that the Papists with him at their head (for both he and the Queen were boldly accused of being accomplices in the plot) had conspired to kill the King, subvert the
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the government, and bring in Popery, Charles II. what further argument could be required for his exclusion and the utter extinction of his religion? The bill of exclusion was twice, with the most determined violence, brought into parliament; it passed the house of Commons, but the Lords threw it out by a great majority.

The King now became fullen and thoughtful; opposition had soured his temper, and he resolved to effect by resolution what mildness could not accomplish. The parliament spent their strength in vain efforts. During the recess, he had received the most adulatory addresses from his subjects; they censured the stubborn opposition of parliament, and offered to support the just rights of the crown. The popular commotions subsided, and the horrors of Popery seemed to wear away. The thinking part of the nation were seen to blush at their late wild credulity and extravagance: But an impression was made which no time will hardly efface. To the word *Popery*, before sufficiently tremendous in its sound, so many new ideas of terror were annexed, and so great ever since has been the aim of some men to

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maintain

Charles II. maintain the delusion, that I am not surprised the minds of many should at this day feel its effects. Yet scarcely one person of common reading can be found, who does not acknowledge that the plot, I have described, was either the work of malice, or of design and faction.—In 1684 Charles died, and because, in his last moments, he professed himself a Catholic, it is probable that at all times, in his few serious hours, he had been strongly inclined to the principles of that religion.

The reader will be surprised, that I should have said nothing of a conspiracy, in which Protestants of the first distinction were concerned. The views of these men were various; the redress of grievances, the destruction of monarchy, or the gratification of revenge. These ends they aimed to obtain, by involving the kingdom in the horrors of a civil war; whilst under-actors were, at the same time, engaged in a desperate scheme of assassinating the King and the Duke of York. These also were Protestants. The sword of sedition, with the bowl and dagger, were now taken into new hands; and had not Providence interfered, Charles, whose life had often
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been exposed to *imaginary* danger from the machinations of Papists, had *really* fallen by the authors of the Rye-House Plot. A writer, so disposed, might, on this occasion, recriminate with weighty retaliation; but my object is not to exculpate my own party, by a display of criminal excesses in their adversaries. I wish only *to speak of them as they were*. But if the pen of a Protestant can be excused from vicious partiality, who loads the whole Catholic body with opprobrious charges, for the follies in which a few were engaged; surely the same latitude may be allowed to others. It is a liberty, however, which the candid and honest historian will not be inclined to use.

THE death of Charles affected his subjects according to the different views of the parties, which then divided the nation. The Catholics were full of expectation from a Prince, who now openly professed their religion. The loyal Protestants, with law and the constitution on their side, had nothing, they thought, to apprehend, even from a Popish Monarch. The Whiggish faction alone had no favour to hope for; and

Charles II.

James II.

James II. and their late attempts had brought them into general discredit with the nation. James the Second ascended the throne. Bigoted, headstrong, and imprudent, he had long, it seems, formed the design of new-modelling the religion of his country. Had the exclusion-bill passed, and James never reigned, it would have been well for Catholics. Yet the easy suppression of Monmouth's rebellion, and the execution of the heads of that desperate faction, seemed at first to promise success to his most sanguine schemes. The barbarities committed by his officers on the defenceless rebels, were, with much ill-nature, imputed to the King: It was said, his religion delighted in blood. This was a wayward charge.—Very soon was exhibited a scene of imprudences, which folly alone or treacherous design could have dictated. James had admitted Catholic officers into his army, whom he dispensed from the *Test*: against this the parliament remonstrated; he returned them a peevish answer, and dissolved them. His determination then was to have a Catholic interest in the Privy Council. Four Lords of that persuasion were admitted; and the crafty Sunderland, with much piety decla-
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ring himself a Papist, was nominated President. In other parts of the kingdom the old magistrates were displaced, and Catholics put in their room. Protestants very justly took the alarm, and the established Church, though ever loyal, shewed a face of determined opposition to such rash measures. A high Court of Ecclesiastical Commission was therefore appointed; and though wholly composed of Protestant members, it gave universal offence. Its office was to inspect all Church affairs; to reward the pliant, and to punish the refractory. It was a Court of *Inquisition*.—The next step was to grant liberty of conscience to all Sectaries. The King published his declaration, which contained much good sense, and great liberality of sentiment: But its drift was evident, and the nation loudly complained. Chapels were now opened, and the Catholic service publicly performed. Father Petre, a weak but designing Jesuit, appeared at Court, and was sometime after sworn a member of the Privy-Council. An Ambassador extraordinary was sent to Rome, to lay at his Holiness's feet the King's submission, and to solicit a mitre and a Cardinal's hat for the brows of Petre.

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James II. The Romans saw the folly of this precipitate conduct: "Your King, said they, should be excommunicated for thus attempting to overturn the small remains of Popery in England." A Nuncio was however sent, and he was received at Windsor with solemn pageantry.—He then attempted to obtrude his Catholic minions on the Universities: This was opposed with becoming resolution.—A second declaration for *liberty of conscience* was issued, with this particular injunction, that it should be read in all the Churches. The Bishops remonstrated; they were summoned before the Council; were sent to the Tower; were soon after tried—and acquitted.—The resentment of the people was now raised to the utmost: The King began to see the folly of his proceedings; he wished to call a parliament; and to effect that by constitutional means, which he had vainly attempted by every stretch of his dispensing power. It was now too late: News was brought him that William Prince of Orange was preparing a strong force to invade his territories. Dismayed and terrified, he now saw there was no redress, for he had forfeited all claim to the love of his subjects. The Prince landed; and

James

James forsook a throne which he was unfit, and, I think, unworthy, to govern.— James II.
When he first retired from London, the mob rose, and destroyed every Catholic Chapel in the city; nor was there a county in England, in which they did not leave some marks of their indignation.

Every attempt of James to subvert the established religion, or rather to give toleration to Catholics, (for this was all he then aimed at) was attended with the most glaring violations of the laws; and the powers he assumed of dispensing with them, without the consent of Parliament, broke asunder that sacred compact, by which the people are bound to their Sovereign. He was no longer entitled to their allegiance. Every patriot should have voted for his expulsion. Kings are made for the people, and the laws of the realm are their only rule of conduct: when they violate these, (it matters not under what pretence) they become tyrants.—It was unfortunate for James to have been so ill-advised. The inclinations of his own mind would not, I think, have hurried him on so far. But wicked and designing Ministers, leagued with weak and infatuated

James II. Priests, must at any time prove an overmatch for greater abilities than ever fell to the lot of a Stuart. The Catholics, as a body, merit not the reprehension, I give to Petre and his associates. They saw the wretched folly and the weak views of those bad advisers; and they condemned the precipitancy of measures which, they knew, could only terminate in their ruin. As must ever be the case with all men, in a similar situation, they wished to be relieved from oppression; but the undisturbed practice of their religion, with the enjoyment of some few civil liberties, would have satisfied their most sanguine desires. This I know from certain information: But unhappily for them and for their descendants, the voice of prudence and of cool religion was not attended to, whilst wild zeal and romantic piety were called in to suggest schemes of folly, and to precipitate their execution.

William III. AS the *Revolution*, in the year 1688, took place in opposition to James's wild projects of introducing Popery, the Catholics, it should seem, had much to apprehend from the event. But William was too good

a politician to be inclined to ways of violence or persecution. He had been educated in a school, which taught him to appreciate merit or demerit in a subject, not from his religious tenets, but from the powers he possessed to promote or to oppose the designs of his master. Catholics therefore soon experienced the lenity of his government; and though the laws against them remained unrepealed, yet they were seldom put into rigorous execution. He considered them as a small member of the great Jacobitical body, whereof as the Protestants were, without comparison, the most formidable faction, his good sense told him that these were to be watched with peculiar jealousy. He also soon discovered, that tho' the Whigs had been principally instrumental in his elevation to the English throne, they were of a suspicious and untractable character, whose ideas of liberty were ever foremost, and who would never lose any opportunity of abridging the Royal Prerogative. The Catholics themselves were not dissatisfied with their condition; it was bad indeed, but they had expected it would have been much worse: And had not a false notion of Hereditary and Divine Right warped their

William III. judgments, and taught them to believe Loyalty to the house of Stuarts was a virtue of singular merit, they would probably have sat down, happy in the lowest condition of British subjects. But this was a prepossession not peculiar to Catholics ; it had its votaries in every other religious persuasion.

In the beginning of his reign, to conciliate the affections of the Dissenters, whom he feared, the King passed the famous *Toleration Act*, by which they were freed from the penalties of the *Act of Uniformity* ; and to indulge the ill humour of others, though contrary to his line of politics, yet, because he did not fear them, he permitted some severe statutes to be enacted against the Catholics. By these they are ordered to remove ten miles from Westminster ; not to keep arms, or to be in possession of any horse above the value of five pounds ; the Universities were vested with the advowsons belonging to them : and that the most distant hope of introducing Popery might be for ever precluded, an act of parliament passed declaring that no Papist, nor any one who marries a Papist, shall inherit the crown.

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When James was in Ireland attempting to recover the sceptre he had forfeited, and when again, two years after, assisted by the French with a formidable fleet, he meditated a descent in England, the Catholics kept themselves quiet. I will not say, they did not wish him success, or that many would not have joined him, had he landed. Such measures their Jacobitism dictated, as it did to the rest of the party.—Nor, in the two desperate plots, which were formed to restore the fallen King, in the last of which the design was to assassinate William, are there any Catholics to be found of the least note or interest. Men of abandoned character and of desperate fortune, as I have often before observed, are always ready to engage in such attempts. But in both plots names were discovered of many Protestants, even of the Whiggish faction, which were capable of giving splendor to the darkest designs. The King even wished not to know, says Burnet, the number of those who were in conspiracy against him, and declined all rigid enquiry.—It is rather singular, that factious men had now abandoned the old trick, of alarming the nation with the horrors

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William III. of some Popish plot, that their own schemes might go on unobserved: The reason probably was, they knew William to be a Prince too inquisitive to be imposed on by fiction; and too determined to be intimidated by the recital of imaginary dangers.

In 1699, the 11th of William, an act passed for *further preventing the growth of Popery*, of peculiar severity. A reward of a hundred pounds is offered for apprehending any Priest or Jesuit: Papists not taking the oaths in six months, after eighteen years of age, are declared incapable to inherit lands, &c. and the next of kin, a Protestant, to enjoy the same; also Papists are made incapable to purchase lands: Ambassadors not to protect Priests that are subjects of England: a hundred pounds forfeit for sending a child to be educated abroad in the Romish Religion: Popish parents obliged to allow a maintenance to their children, becoming Protestants, at the Chancellor's determination.—The last clause excepted, there is something so singularly cruel in this act, made at a time when it does not appear that Catholics had given any just cause of provocation,
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that to a person, unacquainted with the William III.
 circumstances in which it passed, it must
 appear strangely unaccountable. This is
 the act, parts of which the humanity and
 Christian moderation of a British Par-
 liament has lately thought proper to re-
 peal.—I shall give in Bishop Burnet's
 own words, who was at the time himself
 in the house, a short history of the passing
 of this singular act.

“ Upon the peace of Ryswick, says he,
 (two years before) a great swarm of Priests
 came over to England, not only those
 whom the Revolution had frightened away,
 but many more new men, who appeared
 in many places with great insolence; and
 it was said, that they boasted of the favour
 and protection of which they were assured.
 Some enemies of the government began to
 give it out, that the favouring of that re-
 ligion, was a secret article of the peace;
 and so absurd is malice and calumny, that
 the Jacobites began to say, that the King
 was either of that religion, or at least a
 favourer of it: Complaints of the avowed
 practices and insolence of the Priests were
 brought from several places, during the last
 Session of Parliament, and those were
maliciously

William III. maliciously aggravated by some who cast the blame of all on the King.

“ Upon this, some proposed a bill, that obliged all persons educated in that religion, or suspected to be of it, who should succeed to any estate before they were of the age of eighteen, to take the oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, and the Test, as soon as they came to that age; and till they did it, the estate was to devolve to the next of kin, that was a Protestant; but was to return back to them, upon their taking the oaths. All Popish Priests were also banished by the bill, and were adjudged to perpetual imprisonment, if they should again return to England; and the reward of a hundred pounds was offered to every one who should discover a Popish Priest, so as to convict him. Those who brought this into the House of Commons, hoped that the Court would have opposed it; but the Court promoted the bill; so when the party saw their mistake, they seemed willing to let the bill fall; and when that could not be done, they clogged it with many severe and some unreasonable clauses, hoping that the Lords would not pass the act; and
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it was said, that if the Lords should make the least alteration in it, they, in the house of Commons, who had set it on, were resolved to let it lie on their table, when it should be sent back to them. Many Lords, who secretly favoured Papists, on the Jacobite account, did, for this reason, move for several alterations; some of these importing a greater severity; but the zeal against Popery was such in that house, that the bill passed without any amendment, and it had the Royal Assent."

DURING the thirteen years of Queen Anne's reign, who, on the death of William in 1702, succeeded to the throne, Catholics were permitted to live free from molestation, subject only to such restraints as former laws had imposed. They were by no means disagreeable to Anne; she recollected the loyalty they had always shewn to her family; nor did their present attachment to her unfortunate brother James give her displeasure. Her throne was too firmly fixed to be shaken by a reed so broken.—The profession of the same political opinions with the Tories, contributed not a little to procure them some esteem

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Anne. from that powerful faction; it removed part of the odium that had been annexed to the name of Papist.—The Whigs continued to detest them, not now so much from hatred of their religion, as because their Tory principles threw some weight into the scale of their opponents.—The nation at large, amused with the sound of victories, which on all sides attended our arms, and engaged in the animosity of political altercations, lost sight of every other object: Enthusiasm in politics had taken place of Enthusiasm in religion.—The leading men of the Catholic party, though removed from the concerns of state, warmly espoused the Tory interest; whilst the body itself, now reposing from the violence of former oppression, seemed to enjoy their present small allotment of ease, and sometimes perhaps amused themselves with the vain reflection, that at the death of Anne, their favourite James might be called to the throne of his ancestors. In their turn they hated the Whigs, whom they considered as the instruments of the Revolution; and though this event had proved the real cause of their present happiness, it would have been criminal, they thought, to have indulged any favourable emotions towards

towards them. Such was the character of Anne. their loyalty; and at that time a Whig-Catholic would have been deemed a phenomenon, fit only to excite the detestation of some, and the amazement of others.

At the end of the session in 1706, great complaints were made in both houses of parliament of the growth of Popery, particularly in Lancashire, and of great imprudencies committed both by the Laity and Priests of that communion. I do not find what these imprudencies were. A bill was therefore brought into the Lower House, with such clauses, as would have rendered more effectual the late act of King William. The Catholics made powerful intercession. The court seemed indifferent in the matter; whilst the enemies to the bill represented it as unreasonably severe at a time, when we were in alliance with so many Princes of that religion, and when the Queen was actually interceding for indulgence to the Protestants in their dominions. It was contrary also, they said, to those maxims of liberty of conscience and toleration, which now began so generally to prevail.—It was answered, that the avowed dependence

Anne. of Papists on a foreign jurisdiction, and at present on a foreign Pretender to the crown, put them in a situation widely different from that of other Dissenters; that they were rather to be considered as enemies to the state, than as British subjects.—The first of these charges was a groundless accusation, the second was equally applicable to the whole Jacobitical Faction.—The bill dropt; and an address was made to the Queen that she would order a return, of all the Papists in England, to be prepared, for the next session of parliament.

The violent commotions, which were raised in 1709, on account of the doctrine of Non-resistance and other Tory-maxims, advanced in a sermon by Sacheverel, though partly of a religious complexion, contributed not a little to draw the attention of the public from all considerations of Popery. The established Church warmly espoused his cause, declaring their abhorrence of all Whiggish doctrines; and the popular fury, which before had always raged against Popery, flamed out with unusual violence against the Dissenting Protestants. The cry was, *The Church*
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and Sacheverel. In their madness, they Anne,
 destroyed several Meeting-Houses, plundered the dwellings of many eminent Dissenters, and even, it is said, proposed to attack the Bank itself. Some people of better fashion were supposed to direct these proceedings; they followed the mob in hackney coaches, and were seen sending messages to them. At this time, a Catholic, with Sacheverel's sermon in his hand, might have preached all the doctrines of Rome at Charing Cross, and have received the shouts of the multitude: So small were the remains of common reason and consistent sense!

In the twelfth year of her Majesty, some other complaints being made against Catholics, though I cannot find of what nature they were, a bill passed against them, for rendering more effectual the act of King William. By this they are disabled from presenting to benefices; and the benefices in their presentation are confirmed to the two Universities, who may prefer bills in Chancery to discover fraudulent trusts.

George I. PURSUANT to the *Act of Succession*, on the death of Anne, George the First, the next Protestant heir, came to the throne in 1714.—The friends to James now saw all their schemes for his restoration at once blasted, and themselves exposed to the frowns of their new King. The exultation of the Whigs was indeed unbounded, when the road to honours and exclusive favour lay open before them, and their enemies were fallen at their feet. George could not but view those men in a favourable light, who had so long professed themselves his friends, and to whose exertions he owed his crown. The Tories were his enemies, and they expected little favour. As to the Catholics, though it was well known they would have bled to impede his succession, yet the King was only disposed to view them in the common light of other opponents. In Germany he had learned a lesson of religious moderation. Where Catholics and Protestants blend promiscuously together, and pray to God under the same roof, all acrimony and marks of odious distinction must necessarily disappear. He likewise perceived, they were too insignificant to create any uneasy solicitude; nor did he wish to provoke

a worm by wanton severities. The word *George I.*
Popery to his ears conveyed no ideas of
 horror : *Jacobitism* was a sound more re-
 plete with danger and suspicion. The
 Catholics themselves, though sorely dis-
 appointed, were little inclined to murmur,
 when they saw before them a fair prospect
 of tranquillity, which nothing, it appeared,
 but their own folly could disturb. They
 were therefore easy under this new ar-
 rangement ; those only excepted, whose
 dreams of loyalty, disturbing the obvious
 suggestions of prudence and common sense,
 rendered unsatisfied and restless. But as
 yet no occasion offered for exertion.
 With others of the same description, they
 therefore sat down, in sullen resignation,
 brooding over their airy prospects of golden
 days, framing plans of vast execution,
 and cherishing, in great self-complacency,
 all the comforts of those exalted virtues,
 which Jacobitism only could inspire.

The popular cry against the Dissenters
 still prevailing, they were branded as
 the promoters of opinions, from which
 not only heterodoxy, but vice of every
 kind, were daily gaining strength. The
 established Church, it was said, stood in
 imminent

George I. imminent danger of subversion. The Clergy were loud in their complaints; but they were now silenced, and all disputations on religious topics were prohibited. But these methods proving inefficacious to stop the mouth of opposition, an artifice of singular power was devised. *Jacobitism* and *Popery* were made synonymous terms; and all such as testified any discontent against government were branded with the double appellation. The Tories were universally involved in this imputation; whilst the real Catholics, besides the old stigma of their religion, had also to bear the charge of political heterodoxy. The Whigs triumphed in this fortunate stratagem: It sunk the popularity of their opponents; nor could the effect be evaded, since it was well known that the charge in general was founded on truth. The Tories were, in principle at least, friends to Jacobitism, and so were the Papists; they should not therefore, it seemed, be great enemies to each other. From this time, and for many years to come, the words *Jacobite* and *Papist* remained inseparably united.

In the rebellion of 1715, so rashly concerted to restore the Pretender, we find names of every description in religion and politics; Tories, Whigs, Church of England-Men, Dissenters, and Catholics. The discontented of all parties engaged. It can be no surprise, if many Catholics espoused the wild attempt: Their attachment to James, as I have said, was of the most sincere and sanguine character; and the religious prejudices of many at that time were warm enough to inspire them with enthusiasm in the cause. The number of real insurgents was, however, inconsiderable: The whole body wished him success, but the ardour of all was not sufficiently flaming to lead them to the field of action.—The forfeiture of property, which succeeded the execution of some of the principal Catholic rebels, was a great blow to the interest of the body; but fortunately the blood then spilt read a lesson to the rest of the party, which has proved highly useful to their posterity. From that day, their loyalty began to cool, and Jacobitism was little more than an empty sound.

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George I.

When men act from principles, however erroneous, they acquire a consistency of character, which, by proper management, may be directed to much good. George weighed attentively the motives, which had drawn the Catholics into the late rebellion; he admired their steady, though mistaken loyalty; he pitied their blindness; and he wished to reclaim them. A project therefore, in the year 1719, was set on foot, and I believe with serious design, to give them ease, and thereby to ensure their future allegiance. Ministry were engaged in the scheme, and seemed to wish it success. But this also ended just as every other project had ended before. The committee of Catholics, appointed to conduct the business, disagreed amongst themselves; the affair sunk, and was heard of no more. The principal agent was Dr. Strickland, afterwards Bishop of Namur, who was very intimate with the King, and whose views, had they been followed, might have brought certain relief to his party. But there was a narrowness in the minds of Catholics, Laity as well as Clergy, which little less than miraculous powers could have enlarged. Thanks to Heaven! those powers,

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from that time, began to operate, and George I. the present generation dares to think and to act, on a more liberal and extensive plan.

Some laws, even during this reign, were made against Catholics. Their hard fate would have it, that no era of British History should be left without some mark of their oppression ! By the first of George, within six months after they come to the age of twenty-one, they are obliged to register their names and estates with the clerk of the peace : The non-compliance with this form to be punished with forfeiture of estate, &c.—By the third of George, they are charged with an additional expence in every family-transaction, by being compelled to inroll all deeds, &c.—They are also loaded with the payment of a double sum assessed upon Protestants by the land-tax act ; but this, I believe, was first ordered in the reign of William.

THE thirty-three years of George the George II. second's reign, which began in 1727, exhibit no material change in the condition of Catholics. They continued in the same

George II. state of tranquillity, unengaged spectators of those turbulent scenes, in which the nations of Europe were successively occupied. One event only happened, which I shall presently notice, in which they were concerned, and which probably, if human foresight may be allowed to judge, will be the last.

From the ease they had now, for a long time, enjoyed, and which, compared with their former state of perpetual vexation, was very great, Catholics had become more sociable; they began to taste those sweets of life, which liberty and open intercourse with the world can supply. As the weight of oppression lightened, and the severity of penal prosecution ceased, the stern vigour of their minds relaxed, and they every day lost something of that enthusiasm of soul, which the sufferers for real, or for fancied justice, always experience. Such enthusiasm can give charms to oppression or to death. The consequences of this change were evident. Men of family grew daily less zealous in religion; their wonted loyalty abated; and they insensibly reformed first their politics, and soon after often conformed

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to the established Church. Already, during the present century, this has been the case with many; and every year will now continue to witness the progress of the same revolution. The splendor of the party by such means vanished; whilst the remaining multitude were viewed as an object, capable of raising, nor love, nor hatred, nor envy, nor suspicion: and had not the late rebellion of 1745 unfortunately intervened, before this day, probably, the name of Popery would have been an unheeded sound, and all execution of the penal statutes utterly suspended.

George II.

At the instigation of French counsels, who never meant to give him any real support, and hurried on by the bad advice of his misjudging friends, and his own vain ambition, the young Pretender, with an army of seven men, landed in Scotland. In this Northern soil, so congenial with its nature, had long been planted the tree of rebellion, and under its deadly shade grew many noxious herbs, favourable to the nurture of bigotry, fanaticism, treason, and all the selfish and unfociable passions. The Scots often resorted to this fatal spot, and in large draughts

George II. draughts drank down the contagion; here they met the young adventurer. The first success, and subsequent events, of this rash invasion are well known. Its chief, and almost only, support was from Scotland, assisted afterwards by a few English, and of these a very small part were Catholics. There appeared no real disposition in the rest of the party to join him, though their wishes were very fervent for his success. A general alarm was now given to the nation, and the old cry of *Popery* was echoed from shore to shore. The rebellion, however, was soon terminated. Some lives were forfeited, and the tumults subsided. But a fresh impression was again made, which called up the former animosity of the nation, and it was said by many, that Papists would never peaceably submit to a Protestant government. This was an ill-natured charge. For very few Catholics, I have observed, were engaged in the rebellion: and if the body must suffer for the follies of these few, surely the same should be the fate of Protestants; for of these, some in England, and many in Scotland, joined the Rebel standard. There is also something to plead in favour of Catholics, which is
not

not applicable to Protestants. These men George II. enjoyed all the privileges of British subjects, whilst the former were oppressed; and this for the original sin imputed to their ancestors, in which they at least had no concern. When a prospect of relief opens, may not the wretched strive to enter? But he that is not easy on a bed of roses, deserves to be laid on thorns.

When the popular fury had subsided on the extinction of the rebellion, the Catholics gradually returned to their state of tranquillity; and thus they lived, peaceable and unoffending subjects, complying with the respective duties of civil life, and worshipping God in the very retired and secret manner, the lenity of government allowed, during the remaining part of his Majesty's reign.

In the short view, I have exhibited, the reader has seen the successive revolutions and changes to which the Catholics of England have been subjected from the Reformation, almost down to the present day. It is unnecessary to recapitulate events, where the subject has been drawn to so small a point. I leave him therefore
to

George II. to his own reflections. One observation only I wish to add; that in no part of the history of mankind do we meet with any society, who have made fewer attempts to regain their lost privileges, or who for these attempts have been subjected to severer penalties. In their constant behaviour to Catholics, I can no where discover the least trace of that liberal, humane, and manly spirit which, on every other occasion, is seen to animate the breasts of Englishmen. Yet we are the old stock, from whence they sprung.

George III. NO occurrence, of sufficient weight to call the historian's attention, having happened in the concerns of Catholics; for the seventeen first years of his Majesty's reign, I hasten to the transactions of 1778; when a bill was obtained, by which some relief was granted them from the severity of a former statute. The uniform tenour of their conduct, in circumstances of real trial, had convinced their greatest enemies, that now at least they deserved the indulgence of government. If they may not enjoy unlimited toleration, said they, we should

should not, however, oppress unoffending George III. citizens.

A Philosopher, who should have viewed the general features of the nation, at this time, would have been induced to believe, that a more favourable opportunity never could have offered, for an oppressed party to sue for redress. The bigotry and narrow fancies of former days seemed melted down into extensive philanthropy, and a mild indulgence even to the errors of our fellow-creatures. In Church, the great points of religious toleration had been ably investigated; and very few there were, on the bench of Bishops, who were not strongly disposed to allow the fullest liberty to Dissenters of every description.—State politicians concerned themselves little in affairs of conscience; they had objects of another nature to attend to, which demanded more than common exertion; besides, they wished the concurrence of all men to their schemes, whether of war or of peace.—The enemies to government were numerous and determined; but they were men peculiarly liberal in sentiment, and whose notions of extensive freedom could not surely be reconciled with the

George III. smallest element of oppression.—The higher ranks in life affected to think lightly of religion in general: To them every species of persecution was an absurdity, odious and contemptible. Many of them had travelled, and had seen religion in all its modes; they had dined with Cardinals, and perhaps conversed with the Pope; and had found him to be a good-tempered, inoffensive old man, without either horns or cloven feet.—The multitude, as is ever the case, copied their superiors: Much irreligion every where prevailed amongst them, particularly in the towns; it was not therefore to be apprehended, they would be alarmed with any indulgence allowed to Catholics.—The Disciples of Wesley only, and some of the Dissenting congregations, appeared to retain the illiberal stiffness of old times; the word *Popery* to their ears was still a sound of horror. But then the Dissenters were themselves petitioning for relief, and the Methodists, it was hoped, had not totally lost the mild character of the established Church, of which they still affect to be members.—At the head of all, George the Third was known to have inherited the religious moderation of his family; and
in

in him this amiable disposition had been early improved by a philosophic and liberal education. He knew, the Catholics of England were good subjects; he knew, the old popular cry against Popery, though for one time politically kept up to serve his family, was at this day disingenuous and sordid; and he knew, that the attachment they had to the Stuarts, was now universally transferred to the house of Hanover. In that steadiness of mistaken loyalty so long preserved, he discovered a sure pledge of the unalterable permanency of their present allegiance.—In this state of things the Catholics were advised first to address his Majesty, and then to petition parliament for relief. The success, which attended these measures, convinced them, that they were not deceived in the favourable notions they had formed of the times. It has been said that the Popish bill was *insidiously* brought into parliament at the end of a session, when many of the members were out of town, and when the others wished to retire. It has also been said; that had time been allowed for cool reflection, or had the sense of the nation been maturely taken, the bill had never passed.—The *fact*, with regard to

George III. the first allegation, is true. But it so happened by no intentional or collusive design. The Catholics themselves, as I well know, never thought of petitioning for relief till towards the end of Lent of that year, and from that time there was not a day to lose. This, I believe, was rather a fortunate circumstance. For though no bill could have passed with more concurrent approbation of both houses, which were by no means thin, as is falsely asserted; yet had leisure been given for the ill humour of bigotry and of Scotch fanaticism to ferment, most probably, to judge from late experience, an opposition might have been blown up, far too powerful for all the efforts of good sense and Christian moderation. But the nation at large was not displeased with the bill. Their sense is to be taken, whilst they are cool and temperate; and not when sedition has raised discontents and murmurs, by the bad arts of misrepresentation and calumny. This was most notoriously practised: For when parliament lately examined the grounds, from which rose the popular clamour, it was found that no single charge, urged by the petitioning Protestants, was true. The

Catholics

Catholics had taken no unfair advantage George III. of the indulgence granted them; they had opened no new Schools; had built no additional Chapels; had inveigled no Protestant children; had laboured to make no new Profelytes; in a word, they had lived in the same retired, unoffending manner, as had been, for many years, their wonted practice. Their countenances had perhaps put on a more cheerful air, and did Englishmen envy them this portion of happiness!

The indulgence they had obtained, tho' they were thankful for it, was after all but a small favour. The new bill repealed only some parts of the act of the 12th of King William; those which related to the apprehending of Popish Bishops and Priests, and subjected them, as also Papists keeping school, to perpetual imprisonment; likewise that clause which disabled Catholics from inheriting or purchasing lands. But they were not to benefit even of this indulgence, unless, within a limited time, they took and subscribed an oath, in itself sufficiently humiliating, which was prepared for them.—The other clauses of this act, with the whole code of other
severe

George III. severe and sanguinary laws, remained, and do now remain, in full force against them. Yet the public has been told, that an unlimited Toleration had been granted to Catholics. Were the authors of such malignant reports reduced to their state, the slaves in the plantations of Jamaica would have little reason to envy their condition. The act of William, from the reward it held out to informers, of which bad use had often been made, and from the particular circumstances which attended its original formation, was judged to be peculiarly deserving of this partial repeal.

I am not disposed to enter into a detail of those riotous proceedings, which disgraced the month of June of 1780; they are still fresh in every one's memory; and they will continue to blacken the annals of English history to the latest times.— I have before me an accurate narrative of the transactions of each meeting of the Protestant Association, previous to their fatal assembly in St. George's Fields. It was taken by a person, who gave painful attendance at their several convocations. Neither reason, humanity, nor religion, were ever permitted to enter their doors; wild

wild uproar, ranting declamation, and low calumny, directed their councils, and dictated their resolves. The event answered such antichristian deliberations.—The scheme of opposition, taken up by these mad reformers, originated in Scotland. They had set the example; and they gave them a President well adapted to the work. The Scots gloried, that by so nobly withstanding every design to give relief to their Catholic fellow-subjects at home, they had fought the battles of the Lord, and had triumphed. They were ready, they said, to march into England, to prosecute the holy war, and to sacrifice to the manes of Knox, those friends to superstition and idolatry, who had dared to listen to the soft suggestions of humanity and reason, rather than to the howls of intolerant fanaticism.—The reader will excuse my warmth when I speak of these men: It is Philosophy pleading the cause of human nature in the year 1780.—I must add, if Ministry had acted with becoming fortitude in the riots of Scotland, we should not probably have seen a Protestant Association in London. But firmness is not a virtue of modern growth.

With

George III.

With pleasure I could draw a contrast betwixt the behaviour of Catholics and that of their enemies. Whilst these were meditating schemes of oppression and cruelty, they silently looked on; nor could they be persuaded to think that any application to parliament, for a repeal of their bill, was seriously intended. Conscious of the rectitude of their own conduct, they wished not to impute such bad designs to any men. Otherwise a timely application might probably have frustrated the projected plan. When the riots began, their behaviour was still more exemplary. With pain they viewed themselves as the innocent occasion of such wild and calamitous tumults; and they lamented to see soldiers marching into London, those dangerous protectors of the lives and property of British citizens. They could have themselves repelled the most determined attacks of that lawless rabble; and it was with difficulty that a brave insulted band of Irish Catholics were restrained from dreadful retaliation. At one time, the innate principle of self-preservation seemed to call for such a measure. But fearful of adding to the scene of consternation, and desirous of convincing their greatest enemies,

mies, that the love of order and of peace was, in their minds, superior to all other considerations, the Catholics rather chose to see their property destroyed, and themselves shamefully insulted, than to resist. The principles of such men are not surely of that dark complexion, which misrepresentation has instructed the mind of ignorance to believe. Their only wish had been, to possess their own property in legal security, to educate their own children, and to worship God in the manner their consciences directed. This privilege the laws of nature seem to allow to all men; but when a British Parliament had granted it to Catholics, a mob of British Protestants tumultuously demanded its revocation.

George III.

It is time to lose sight of this horrid transaction, and coolly to pursue another object. Reflection naturally occurs to every man, and if himself uninformed, he wishes to ask the following question: "Is there really any thing in the manners or in the principles of Catholics, at the present day, that can justly give alarm to government, as now established in Church or State?" It matters not, what all or any

Conclusion.

Conclusion. of that body may have thought or practised in former times; nor does it regard us, what may now be the sentiments of Catholics in other countries. We wish information with regard to those few only, who actually live amongst us. The clamours of a mob, or the declamatory discourses of ignorant, selfish, and bigoted men, deserve no attention; they must ever deceive us: but in cool and dispassionate temper, we desire to receive such instructions, as can only be supplied by those, who are themselves Catholics, and who are thoroughly acquainted with the real state of that body now in England.

The author of these sheets flatters himself, he can give this information: he was educated in an English College abroad; he has since that lived and conversed with people of all ranks in that persuasion at home: he is himself a Catholic, and has long made the study of their principles a serious occupation; and, from what has already been delivered in the foregoing pages, he presumes, his readers will not think him too much biassed to his own party, or improperly warm in his representation of men and things. He trusts also, that
his

his Catholic friends will not be offended at the candid description he is going to exhibit of their manners, principles, state, and circumstances. If the view prove sometimes unpleasant, he is not blameable. The artist who sits down to draw a landscape, must, with equal fidelity, describe the dreary wilderness and the flowery plain, if they be real parts of the scene before him.

Conclusion,

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A V I E W of
ENGLISH CATHOLICS,
LAITY and CLERGY;
THEIR
NUMBER, WEALTH, CHARACTER, &c.
In the PRESENT YEAR, 1780.

P A R T II.

IT is surely inconsistent with the cha- Introduction
racter of a great nation to be intimi-
dated by imaginary apprehensions; yet it
often happens that greater alarms are rai-
sed by such impressions, than by the ap-
proach of real and weighty danger. We
have seen how astonishingly this kingdom
has been repeatedly convulsed by fictitious
plots and the vain dread of Popery. The
event has always proved that such fear
was causeless.—Another misfortune is,
that most men, either from indolence or
from

Introduction from want of opportunities, take their information from the report of others; little reflecting, that they who are most ready to inform, are frequently actuated by motives widely distant from the love of truth. To receive such instructions without further enquiry, argues a rash, weak, or a malevolent heart.—When a nation, in any branch of its establishment, is in danger from the supposed designs of a party, there must be something in the principles or in the circumstances of the latter, on which suspicions may be founded. The politician will then take a circumscriptive view. From whatever quarter he is instructed to look for danger, that way he will direct his sight. He has learned, from perusing the history of mankind, that the powers of any faction to do mischief are, in a well-regulated state, extremely limited; and he has also learned that such powers are generally exerted in a similar manner. Human nature is the same in all its evolutions. He has therefore a clue given him, whereby his researches may be drawn to a sure conclusion. If Catholics be a faction dangerous to the state, they must be so in the manner of other factions: The point will be easily

easily decided ; for they are not surely en- Introduction
dowed with powers of preternatural energy.

AFTER repeated enquiries, I am not Number of
yet able to ascertain the real number of Catholics.
Catholics. I have seen some computations,
which are said to have been made, but
they are all exaggerated past belief. From
the best information, I can procure, their
number does not, at this day, exceed
60,000 : and this even, I suspect to be far
beyond the mark.—If the Bishops go on
with their scheme, parliament will soon
be in possession of returns, which must be
considered as accurate and authentic. But
I wish them to be more carefully attentive
than others have been, who formerly un-
dertook the work. Dr. Blackburne, I
think, a few years back, made out an ac-
count from a certain district in the north,
with which he is well-acquainted, which
was shamefully false.—Men violently pre-
judiced, like some insects, see with poly-
hedron optics; that is, their eyes multiply.
Solicitous to make Catholics appear an ob-
ject of terror, because in their cradles they
were often frightened with the name, they
chuse to avoid all accurate computation.—
London

London excepted, very little difficulty would attend a most exact *census*. It has not hitherto been done from indolence or inattention: yet I much wish, for reasons to me very obvious, that some Catholic would at this moment undertake it. In London there would be great difficulty: but a third part at least of their number in that town are foreigners. A watchful government would thin this motley crew, and send them back to their own countries. Their only aim is to emasculate the genuine character of Englishmen, or to eat a bread designed for better industry.

When we take a view of the great body of the nation, on the moderate computation of six millions, even the exaggerated numbers of Catholics vanish to an imperceptible point. Some of the great trading and manufacturing provincial towns are known to contain more inhabitants, than our whole collective numbers amount to. Bristol would think itself sadly depopulated, if reduced to sixty thousand souls. Yet the public is taught to believe that the British constitution is in danger from the attempts of this insignificant multitude! The army they could bring into
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the field, though preceded by the Pope's banner, and fortified with his holy benediction, would cause little terror, I fancy, on the day of action, to the *heretical* force of England. In reading the adventures of Don Quixote, we laugh at the folly of a man, who at every turn could raise up to himself imaginary foes: The conduct of those, who speak gravely of the terrifying numbers of Catholics, is not less ridiculous. *

Part the second. The

* "While King William was engaged in his project of reconciling the religious differences of England, he was at great pains to find out the proportions between Churchmen, Dissenters, and Papists. In his Cabinet there is the following curious report in consequence of an enquiry upon that head.

The number of FREEHOLDERS in ENGLAND.

	<i>Conformists</i>	<i>Non-conformists</i>	<i>Papists</i>
Province of Canterbury	2,123,362	93,151	11,878
of York	353,892	15,525	1,978
In both	2,477,254	108,676	13,856
Conformists	2,477,254		
Non-conformists		108,676	
		2,585,930	
Papists		13,856	
In all England		2,599,786	

* In the Province of Canterbury are 23,740 Papists, half of these are under the age of sixteen years, viz. 11,870; a seventh part of these are aged, and above 3,391. Taking

The few Catholics, I have mentioned, are also dispersed in the different counties. In many, particularly in the West, in South-Wales, and in some of the midland counties, there is scarcely a Catholic to be found. This is easily known from the residence of Priests. After London, by far the greatest number is in Lancashire. In Staffordshire are a good many, as also in the northern counties of York, Durham, and Northumberland. Some of the manufacturing and trading towns, as Norwich, Manchester, Liverpool, Wolverhampton,

king out of the said number of Papists the two last sums, which make in all 15,261; there remains then 8,479, of which the one half are women: there remains therefore in the Province of Canterbury, fit to bear arms, 4,239 Papists.

“The Province of York bears a sixth part of the taxes, and has in it a sixth part of the people as that of Canterbury has, *viz.* 3,956, whereof half are under the age of sixteen, *viz.* 1,978; and a seventh part above sixty, *viz.* 565; and of the aforesaid sixth part one half is women.—The total therefore of this Province fit to bear arms is 701; joining which to the total of those in the Province of Canterbury fit to bear arms, makes the total of the Papists throughout all England fit to bear arms to be 4,940.”

I have taken this from the appendix to Sir John Dalrymple's Memoirs. I cannot think it is by any means accurate: It seems to diminish the number of Catholics as much as later returns augment it. Should it be true, we have greatly increased since that time; whereas I certainly know we are much diminished within this century.

hampton, and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, have Chapels, which are rather crowded, but these constitute the greatest part of the number I have just given to their respective counties. In a few towns, particularly at Coventry, their number, I find, is increased; but this by no means in proportion of the general increase of population in the same places. Excepting in the towns, and out of Lancashire, the chief situation of Catholics is in the neighbourhood of the old families of that persuasion. They are the servants, or the children of servants, who have married from those families, and who chuse to remain round the old mansion, for the conveniency of prayers, and because they hope to receive favour and assistance from their former masters,

Many laws have been enacted to prevent the growth of Popery; and it now is, and always has been, the popular cry, that Papists are daily increasing. One might almost fancy, from the frequency of these reports, that they sprang up, like mushrooms, by instantaneous vegetation. Had there been truth in such reports, how very different, at this day, would be the list of

Catholic names, from what it really is. More than one half, if not the whole English nation, must have been long ago subjected to the See of Rome. The truth is, within the present century we have most rapidly decreased. Many congregations have intirely disappeared in different parts; and in one district alone, with which I am acquainted, eight out of thirteen are come to nothing; nor have any new ones risen to make up, in any proportion, their loss. These are facts of certain notoriety.—In the nature of things, it could not possibly be otherwise. Where one cause can be discovered tending to their increase, their will be twenty found to work their diminution. Among these the principal are, the loss of families by death, or by conforming to the established Church; the marrying with Protestants; and that general indifference about religion, which gains so perceptibly on all ranks of Christians.—When a family of distinction fails, as there seldom continues any conveniency either for prayers or instruction, the neighbouring Catholics soon fall away: And when a Priest is still maintained, the example of the Lord is wanting to encourage the lower class, particularly
to

to the practice of their religion. I recollect the names of at least ten noble families that, within these sixty years, have either conformed, or are extinct; besides many Commoners of distinction and fortune.—The marrying with Protestants, which is now very usual, will necessarily produce the same effect. All, or half the children are, in this case, generally educated Protestants; and when this is not done, example or persuasion often proves equally efficacious.—I need not insist on the operation of the third cause I mentioned.—When we add to these the whole pressure of the penal laws, we have discovered an agent almost sufficiently powerful to shake the faith of martyrs. And certainly, were it not for the steady zeal of their instructors, joined to that firm opposition of mind to which oppression ever gives additional permanency, supported also, as we confide, by the arm of Providence, the Catholics of England must long since have disappeared from the face of the earth. Penalties, discouragements, and disqualifications, with the aspersions of malevolence, and the ridicule of ignorance, make deep impressions on the stoutest minds: They will often prove an overmatch

match even for uncommon resolution and conviction.

To withstand the powerful influence of all these causes, I find little else assigned but a supposed indefatigable ardour of a few Priests. Ignorance alone can lay any stress on this puerile argument. If the Catholic Priesthood ever possessed that astonishing ascendancy, which is ascribed to them, it is now at least evident, that such times are no more. Men, I believe, of every religious persuasion, have the common passions of human nature; and I am too well-acquainted with the general characters of Priests and the circumstances of things, to admit a ridiculous supposition. I shall speak more appositely to this point hereafter. In the mean-time, I must observe how replete with absurdity that idea is, which can fancy, that the learning and attention of Protestant Ministers, assisted by all the weight and interested influence of an established Church, must give way to the imposing arts, as they are called, of an inconsiderable number of Priests! Human nature, as I have observed, in all her ways most perfectly similar, here wantonly departs from order

der and the fixed line of action, to gratify, it seems, the folly of some, and the bad zeal of others.

Nothing then surely is to be feared from the number of Catholics. Let us however see, whether they may not make up by their wealth and landed interest that deficiency which, it may now be owned, must be the natural effect of numeral weakness. What Jupiter despaired of doing by other means, he compassed in a shower of gold.

THE man, who is capable of thought, and who, from thought, can form a judgment, will not be induced to believe that English Catholics can be possessed of riches. They have not, he will say, discovered the Philosopher's Stone; nor does it appear, his Catholic Majesty has yet allowed them to enter the mines of Potosi: Precluded from the Army, the Church, the Bar, and from every place of trust or profit under government, they have no means of acquiring, of improving, or of retrieving, a fortune. The Pope indeed has riches: But it is not usual with the See

Their
Wealth.

of

of Rome to bestow her earthly commodities : She receives, but does not give.

We have, at this day, but eight Peers, nineteen Baronets, and about a hundred and fifty Gentlemen of landed property.—Among the first, the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Shrewsbury, and the Lords Arundel and Petre, are in possession of considerable estates. But the Earl of Surrey, the eldest and only son to the Duke, having lately conformed, the large possessions of that noble and ancient family will soon fall into Protestant hands. The eldest son of Lord Teynham has also left the religion of his father.—Among the Baronets are not more than three great estates : Sir Thomas Gascoigne has this year also taken the oaths. Of the remaining Commoners, with an exception of four or five, the greatest part have not, on an average, more than one thousand pounds per annum, in landed property. Within this year alone, we have lost more by the defection of the two mentioned Gentlemen, than we have gained by Profelytes since the Revolution.

In trade very few fortunes have been made; and at this hour, there are not more than two Catholics of any note who are even engaged in mercantile business. The eldest sons of our Gentry never think of trade; and the younger children have seldom a sufficient fortune, on which to ground any prospect of success. They therefore generally chuse to remain useless and dependent Beings among their relations and friends, or to eat a hardly-earned and scanty bread in the service of some foreign Prince. England, like a cruel stepmother, refuses to give them nourishment. Should America win the great stake, she now so unjustly contends for, good policy will doubtless teach her to open her ports to all religions.—Some few gain a decent livelihood by the profession of medicine, though, in strictness of penal justice, they may not even be apothecaries; and others in the low walks of the law. Were they freely allowed to sell drugs, their drugs, it is well known, would be poison; and the open practice of law would very soon transfer all Protestant property into the hands of Catholics!

The lower classes in life, like other subjects, support themselves and families, by the common arts of industry and labour. They thank Heaven it never entered into the breast of some stern Legislator to restrain them even from that privilege. He might have discovered, that neither the corn which was sown, nor the tree which was planted, by a Popish hand, ever arrived to maturity in Protestant soil. It is, however, certain, that were the laws against Recusants strictly executed, all the sweat of their brows would not discharge the penalties, to which the practice of their religion exposes them.

This being the state of Catholics, where are we to look for their riches. Even the estates, they are now masters of, are daily decreasing, from very obvious causes. There is a vanity of dress, equipage, and of general expence, which has seized all ranks of life. The Catholics are weak enough to give into the common folly. They live, and they spend like their neighbours, not reflecting that what they once dissipate, can by no means be retrieved. The necessary consequence is, that in a very few years, the greatest part of their
present

present possessions must fall into other hands. A Catholic, whom the love of dissipation or of fashionable life calls up to London, should be shut up by his friends in some place of secure confinement: Posterity would be deeply thankful for the kind service. Yet, as among Protestants, so are there among Catholics, Gentlemen of easy fortune who live wholly in the country, not dissipating, but doing much good with the produce of their estates; and their doors are encompassed with the blessings of their neighbours.

Still, however, there subsists an unmeaning cry; That Catholics have money always at hand to forward the growth of Popery, by opening and endowing Schools, by encouraging Profelytes, and by purchasing estates, whereby is to be acquired great parliamentary interest.—The want of religious zeal is, I believe, a strong bar to one attempt, and the want of money is a certain security against the others.

There is another instrument also, which takes away their property more effectually than the highwayman's pistol. This is the annual land-tax act, whereby each

Catholic is loaded with the payment of a sum *double* to that assessed on Protestants. Some attempts have been made to procure relief from this heavy weight ; but as yet there is not sufficient generosity in the breasts of Englishmen, to grant so small a favour, though the change could not possibly be felt by the Protestant public. Drained by this hard imposition, Catholics, in common with other subjects, are yet loaded with those taxes, which even the most wealthy Protestants now affect to say, are become intolerable.—Will malevolent and ignorant men still maintain that Catholics are rich !

Their
Character.

IN point of manners and of moral character, they differ little from other men in the same walks of life. Their foreign education, it is sometimes thought, gives them at first a peculiar cast ; but a free intercourse with the world soon rubs off those acute angles, unless when inveterate habits have been formed, or the mind has been peculiarly narrowed. Some years back, when the penal laws were more strictly executed, and when weak men feared some noxious contagion from the
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the breath of Catholics, they associated very little with the world. A certain sternness of temper was the natural effect of this retirement; and if, in their turn, they felt a strong dislike to Protestants, it was what the conduct of the latter deserved. Some good, however, and that of no trifling consideration, was from thence derived. The estates of Catholics were in better condition; they supported with more becoming liberality their indigent and oppressed neighbours; and in the duties of religion they were greatly more sincere. The diminution of piety and of honest virtue which now prevails, is, in my opinion, but poorly compensated by the tinsel acquirements of a more polished life. Nor, after all, has one effect been obtained, which it was natural to expect. Many Protestants, though they daily converse with Catholics on the easy footing of private friendship, still retain the same general prejudices against them, which the lowest ignorance should now blush at. They can think well enough of individuals; but nothing, they tell you, can be more shocking and absurd than the principles of the body, and nothing more vicious and inimical to the duties of society than

than their general conduct and habits of mind. It is vain to reason with such determined prejudice. Why Catholics, on their side, should entertain more liberal and just sentiments of Protestants, is a problem, I shall not solve. The fact itself is evidenced by hourly experience; and I trust, our principles as men, and our belief as Christians, are at all times as good as theirs.

The characters of the common people are hardly distinguishable from those of their neighbours. If there be any difference, the balance should rather ponderate in favour of Catholics; because, I know they are more carefully instructed in their youth, and are afterwards much attended to. They are solely to blame, if they neglect such means of moral improvement, as are constantly laid before them. It is a serious complaint in the Protestant Church, that this most important of all duties is greatly neglected. As a friend to society I must always think well of that religion, though it were crouded with many speculative absurdities, whose Ministers are attentive to the instruction of youth.

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The lives of Catholics, in general, are observed to be regular : and without panegyri-
zing their virtues, to which I am not inclined, I only beg Protestants themselves to declare their sentiments. Do they know, in the whole extent of his Majesty's dominions, better men, better citizens, or better subjects ; people more amenable to the laws, or more observant of all the duties of civil life ? Their charities, as far as their powers of doing good extend, are great. Every object in distress is a fellow-creature who calls for relief ; nor do I know, that Catholics ever make any distinction of persons, unless (which has sometimes happened) when Protestants have first refused assistance to those of the Popish persuasion.

From Gentry thus dissipated, as the most extravagant Protestants, or else temperate and retired, as the most moderate, and from a commonalty peaceable, virtuous, and honest, what has the most guarded and suspicious government to apprehend ?

NOR

Their
Abilities.

NOR are the natural acquired abilities of Catholics at all calculated to intimidate, from any suspicion that, should an occasion offer, they might either form, or attempt to execute, some grand design for the subversion of this Protestant government. In this regard, they are rather, I think, below, than above, the common level. As their education is inferior to that of Protestants, and as afterwards in life, they have few inducements to improve their understandings by such application, as can alone give superiority to mental talents, they generally rest satisfied with that small pittance of knowledge, which some foreign College originally supplied. Where circumstances allow it, they have perhaps travelled—and so have their portmanteaus. Under the tutelage of some ignorant, and consequently self-sufficient Priest, the youth has seen objects of vast curiosity; he has kissed the Pope's slipper, and he has visited our Lady at Loretto. Thus qualified he returns, and it is well, if he brings not with him many of the follies, and some of the vices, of the countries he has passed through.—However, abstracting from the *pious* part of improvement, which they do not pretend

tend to, Protestant Gentlemen have little more to shew from their travels, than the sons of Catholics.

Though the want of education, I complain of, or rather a total inattention to improvement afterwards, be an insurmountable bar to the acquisition of great accomplishments, yet so very deficient is the present generation of Catholics, that few of them seem to possess those native talents, which often fall to the lot of unimproved mortality. From them the Protestant constitution of England is, I am sure, in no danger. But for the honour, and for the utility, of the Catholic Body, we have much reason to repine at this untoward circumstance. The petitions of a suffering people are often not attended to by those who can give relief, because they are not presented, or pursued, with that spirit of manly firmness and commanding eloquence, which will find their way even to the throne. We are a disunited body, and ever have been so. They who should take the lead, are either unable or unwilling to act; and the body suffers by the indolence, the little views, or the timidity of their leaders. It has
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been

been seen in the preceding pages, how often the best-concerted schemes have been totally frustrated by some foolish or wayward opposition.—I mean not the severity of these reflections should be applied universally to all : We have, amongst us, men of real merit and of strong endowments ; but it is generally the fate, as it is the wish, of these, to be kept back from the eye of public observation.

We have reason, indeed, to lament the loss of a young Nobleman, who very lately, as I mentioned, is gone over to the Protestant side. From nature he had received talents, adequate to the greatest designs, and to these talents he had given some cultivation. But there is in him a cast, a singularity of mind, and a *bizarre-rie* of thought, which must ever give a tinge to the fairest endowments. With abilities equal to the management of great public business, his best ambition will spend itself in vain declamation against men and measures. He was always fond of opposition. I knew him when a boy ; and at that time, to thwart, if possible, by petty controversy, the views of his masters, to complain of undue influence, to magnify

magnify grievances, and to head a little band of malecontents, were the objects truly congenial with his humour. With a less restless, less inconsistent, and less dissipated mind (for dissipation has now greatly added to his native character) he would have mounted with ardour to the first place, at the head of a body of men, to which his birth and his abilities called him. Here was a field wide enough for the display of the greatest talents. He might have given splendor to the Catholic cause; would have possessed their warmest affections; and might have asked relief for himself and for them in a style, that would have commanded attention. If his soul was not large enough to grasp at this high pre-eminence, and if, from insensibility to the impressions of religion, his conscience is sincere, I blame him not, that he has deserted the cause of his Ancestors; but I pity an Earl of S——y, who can sink down to the paltry service of a party-declamer in the Lower House of parliament.

It is a singular circumstance in the Ecclesiastical history of this country, that in proportion as a man loses all sense of re-

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ligion,

ligion, and becomes immoral, he sees before him a better prospect of enjoying all the privileges of the established Church. I never knew an instance, in which conviction of the errors of Popery has made one Profelyte. They become Protestants, as soon as they cease almost to be Christians. It must surely be a bad arrangement, which thus exposes to oppression the sincere and the virtuous, and which opens to the vicious and dissipated man the road of ease, of honour, and of preferment.

It may be expected, whilst the pencil is still in my hand, that I should give a sketch at least of some principal characters, which remain amongst us. It must not be supposed, that the noble Lord, I have mentioned, has carried off with him all the mental worth of the party. When Æneas tore one golden branch from the mystic tree, it was instantly supplied by another,

Primo avulso non deficit alter
Aureus; & simili frondescit virga metallo.
VIRG.

But I am not expert in the art of colouring, and plain delineation might perhaps

haps offend. The most faithful portraits are not always the most pleasing. The public, which well knows how to appreciate merit, is in possession of the originals. If nature has been too thrifty in her gifts, or if circumstances have rather contributed to lull, than to rouse, the faculties of their minds, their condition should not be censured. The most brilliant talents often prove less serviceable than those of a more fixed texture. Even in the works of art, lead and iron are sometimes preferred to more splendid metals. Lead indeed loses with difficulty its well-known character; but iron may be hardened into steel.—*Fungar vice cotis*. I wish I could stimulate some of my acquaintance to a more active exertion of those powers, which they have; and which disuse in a short time may perhaps torpify for ever.

IT has been seen with what firm attachment, Catholics adhered to the house of Stuarts. There was something in that loyalty, which even bordered on infatuation. They had received no favours from them; and experience said, they were not to expect any. Conviction of its rec-
titude

Their Political Sentiments.

titude was therefore the only motive which gave stability to their affection. At the accession of his present Majesty, some few Catholics were still intoxicated with the fumes of Jacobitism; nor did it then seem they could be easily expelled. By one of those singular revolutions, however, for which no cause can be assigned, in the small space of a few years, the distemper worked off; and when the oath of allegiance was tendered in 1778, hardly, I believe, one Catholic refused to take it. It was a capricious event, but to such human nature is often subject.—It may not be inferred, that a change so sudden should not be relied on: For, I am clearly sensible, that Catholics are now as sincere in their attachment to the Hanover family, as they ever were to the Stuarts. Of this they would give the most convincing proofs, were they permitted to attest their allegiance by the common exertions of other subjects.—After all, I see no very particular grounds for this new disposition. We have yet received but little relief; and we continue an oppressed and injured people. The boasted excellencies of the British constitution are nothing to me, who am deprived of the common

right

rights of humanity; they only serve to make my condition more irksome, and to create a restless desire of changes and revolutions. My situation cannot be worse, and it may be mended.

In the present state of contending parties, it is curious to see how Catholics shape their politics. It is the cry of *Opposition*, that they are friends to court measures; that they aim to join their interest to that of the crown; and that against the rights of the people they will ever be ready to strengthen the arm of Prerogative. As this evidently is the language of party, it merits little notice. Catholics are as free to form opinions as other men; and in their general decisions I see the same rule of conduct invariably followed. In their politics is the same discordance and variation of sentiment, as is elsewhere observable. Ignorance only can assert the contrary belief. If, on the whole, they be rather inclined to government, which I think is the case, they have good reasons for their choice. It would be extreme folly to set their faces against that power, from which ultimately all redress must be derived. Besides, they feel
not

not those incentives to opposition, which are known to actuate the breasts of many Protestants.—It is false, that they are friends to arbitrary power. They smart too severely under the rod of oppression, to wish to give it additional strength in the hands of a tyrant. Why even, as is often asserted, should they, from any previous principle, be more inclined to monarchy, than to any other form of government? At this day, there are Catholic republics, and Catholic states of every description. In the annals of this nation, never were there stouter champions for liberty, than the ancient Barons. *Magna Charta* is of Catholic growth. Nor do I know, that the boasting Protestant Patriots, of the present hour, would have acted at *Runimede* with more manly firmness, though their lips, I doubt not, might have distilled more copious streams of honeyed eloquence.—Catholics are instructed to submit themselves to the ruling powers, and not wantonly to engage in faction. The murmurs of disappointed or of disaffected men can seldom be reconciled with reason and the plain dictates of religion.—We acknowledge ourselves much indebted to some Gentlemen in *Opposition*,
and

and we hope to experience the continuance of their favourable exertions ; but in us it would be a conduct highly censurable, were we to adopt the language of party, with a view of making an adulatory tender of services, in themselves too weak and insufficient to effect any real purpose.

It is but lately that Catholics have at all appeared to engage in politics : they were too depressed for the exertions of men ; and even now they scarcely take any decided part. In my opinion, such torpid indifference is reprehensible. I would not be factious, but I would shew that I had some property at stake, and that I wished to see it well defended. We have hitherto gained little by a long course of inactive submission. An Englishman should at all times dare to speak his sentiments. These at least cannot be shackled ; and a *Trimmer* between two parties generally meets the contempt of both.

If Catholics be capable of doing any injury to the state, which, it is said, they are ; surely they are also capable of serving it, in the same proportion. It is the duty therefore of Magistrates, by mild and le-

nient measures, to insure their affections: Should they be incapable of resenting ill usage (and experience has sufficiently declared such to be their lowly condition) how unmanly is it, to oppress the weak and defenceless! They are to a man loyal, sincere, and patriotic; they have given the most solemn security for their allegiance, in this they have done all that men can do; and having done this, they are intitled to the privileges of subjects, and to the protection of the laws.

Their Religion.

IT is therefore in religious matters only that Catholics hold opinions different from those of Protestant Englishmen. Here they pretend not to think as they do; and this candid declaration should give evidence in favour of their general professions. The insincere man would affect coincidence in opinion, as well in religion as in politics, at least when his interest required it; and it will hardly be said, that we should not be benefited by an artful disguise of our religious belief. We declare then our dissent from many parts of the Protestant creed; and we openly avow our faith in
articles

articles, which the reformed Church has utterly exploded.

Liberty of thought is essential to human nature. Take that away, and man, his organization alone excepted, will not be superior to the ass which browses on the thistle, or to the thistle which vegetates from the earth: It is that only which he can strictly call his own, because no created power can deprive him of it. His property may be taken away by the hand of violence, and his person may be thrown into confinement; but in the dungeons of the Bastile his thoughts are still free, and out of the reach of tyranny.—There is no subject on which our thoughts may not range, and on which they may not judge. For what other end, was such extent given to the mental powers? When we abuse these faculties, by an improper display, we become responsible to the Being who gave them to us; but to him only.—In religious enquiries why is our reason to be particularly restrained? As the subject is of singular importance, it seems, even greater latitude should be allowed us. Is it your business to invade the best privilege I enjoy?—With this

conviction of mind I examine, I judge, and I chuse my own religion. It is the affair of my own conscience; it is a concern betwixt myself and God; and it belongs to no other to arraign my conduct, or to censure my determination. To molest me then in the practice of such duties, as my conscience again tells me I should perform, is an equal stretch of tyranny.

On these principles, to me of clearest evidence, is founded the Christian doctrine of *Toleration*; a doctrine, which only ignorance of the rights of mankind, ecclesiastical domination, or blind enthusiasm, could ever controvert. If I dissent from other men; do not they also dissent from me? And if I chuse to submit my faith to the decisions of the Catholic Church, I use no other liberty than he does, who chuses to reject them.—Catholics, I know, have often denied the external practice of religion to Sectaries; they now continue to do so in many countries. It is not my intention to justify what is ill-done. But to be intolerant is a leading maxim of every established Church; whether it have its seat in England or in France, in Hindostan or in China. It is now time to
correct

correct abuses, and not to seek excuse for our own, from the example of others. All are equally censurable; and when English Protestants arraign so severely the intolerance of Rome, they only mark out more pointedly the injustice of their own conduct.

At all events, what has state-policy to do with the concern of a man's conscience? If he obey the laws of his country, and perform the duties of a subject, the demands of the civil magistrate are complied with. Is he to say, "You shall not wear a sword for the defence of your person or property, because you chuse to pray for the repose of the soul of your deceased father; or, if you will not think as I do, I forbid you to approach within ten miles of the capital?"—This surely is a species of sottish tyranny, which could only be exercised at a time, when to be absurd in the extreme was the first endowment of a statesman.

When it is found that any sect of men profess principles in religion, which either tend to the destruction of social happiness, or are incompatible with the established order

order of government, it will not be denied, that the most rigorous means should be used for their suppression. The sword of justice should be drawn, and the miscreants be exterminated. It was thus, the Saxon Edgar freed this kingdom from the ravages of wolves, by which it was once infested. Yet hitherto, I believe, no men have ever professed such destructive tenets. The religion of every man teaches him to be good, and he would be so, were he to comply with its injunctions. The enemies to a sect may charge them falsely, and their misrepresentations may impose on the ignorant. Instructions should be taken from the well-informed, and not from the cry of defamation. I will apply to a man's own heart for an account of his tenets.—No people have suffered so much from slanderous description, as Catholics. They have repeatedly laid their belief before the public; which, with great humanity, always refuses to give credit to their declarations. You shall believe us, they say—but we will not believe you. I suspect there must be some secret motive for this incredulity. For it is the disposition of a virtuous mind not to doubt the assertions of honest men. The liar thinks

no man can speak truth—because he never does it himself.

Once more I will give my reader a concise, but accurate exposition of Catholic belief. It is contained in few propositions. Should it vary from any previous opinions of his own; I only beg he will think, that I know better than he does, what is my own religion. The request is modest.—The following rule I must insist he will attend to, because it is the grand criterion, by which each article of our faith may be distinctly ascertained.

THIS rule is—*All that and only that belongs to Catholic belief, which is revealed in the word of God, and which is proposed by the Catholic Church to all its members, to be believed with divine faith.*

Rule of
Faith and
Articles.

Guided by this certain *criterion* we profess to believe,

1. That Christ has established a Church upon earth, and that this Church is that, which holds communion with the See of Rome, being One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolical.

2. That

2. That we are obliged to hear this Church; and therefore that she is infallible, by the guidance of Almighty God, in her decisions regarding faith.

3. That Saint Peter, by divine commission, was appointed the head of this Church, under Christ its founder: And that the Pope, or Bishop of Rome, as successor to Saint Peter, has always been, and is at present, by divine right, head of this Church.

4. That the Canon of the Old and New Testament, as proposed to us by this Church, is the word of God; as also such traditions, belonging to faith and morals, which being originally delivered by Christ to his Apostles, have been preserved, by constant succession, in the Catholic Church.

5. That honour and veneration are due to the Angels of God and his Saints; that they offer up prayers to God for us; that it is good and profitable to have recourse to their intercession; and that the relics or earthly remains of God's particular servants are to be held in respect.

6. That

6. That no sins ever were, or can be, remitted, unless by the mercy of God, thro' Jesus Christ; and therefore that man's justification is the work of divine grace.

7. That the good works, which we do, receive their whole value from the grace of God; and that by such works, we not only comply with the precepts of the divine law, but that we thereby likewise merit eternal life.

8. That by works, done in the spirit of Penance, we can make satisfaction to God, for the temporal punishment, which often remains due, after our sins, by the divine goodness, have been forgiven us.

9. That Christ has left to his Church a power of granting indulgences, that is, a relaxation from such temporal chastisement only as remains due after the divine pardon of sin; and that the use of such indulgences is profitable to sinners.

10. That there is a Purgatory or middle State; and that the souls of imperfect Christians therein detained are helped by the prayers of the faithful.

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11. That

11. That there are seven Sacraments; all instituted by Christ; Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Order, Matrimony.

12. That in the most holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, there is truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

13. That in this sacrament there is, by the omnipotence of God, a conversion, or change, of the whole substance of the bread into the body of Christ, and of the whole substance of the wine into his blood; which change we call Transubstantiation.

14. That under either kind Christ is received whole and entire.

15. That in the Mass, or Sacrifice of the Altar, is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead.

16. That in the Sacrament of Penance, the sins we fall into after baptism are, by the divine mercy, forgiven us.

These

These are the great points of Catholic belief, by which we are distinguished from other Christian Societies; and these only are the real and essential tenets of our Religion. We admit also the other grand articles of revealed and natural religion, which the gospel and the light of reason have manifested to us. To these we submit as Men and as Christians, and to the former as obedient children of the Catholic Church.

Reader, have you weighed attentively the plain and obvious meaning of these articles? And do you think there is one, which merits to be treated with such harsh censure, as is generally given them? Do you think there is one, the belief of which should, in a Christian country, restrain us from the common privileges of subjects and the blessings of unbounded Toleration? I mean not to say, that our doctrine is of such evidence as to command conviction and instant belief. This is a very different question; nor do I speak of the *truth* of our religion: Were it *false* in every article, my reasoning would be the same.—Tenets which to Catholics, from the long acquired habits of education, may seem familiar

and highly rational, are not therefore calculated to make the same impression on those, to whom they are new and uninteresting. The friend to truth will maturely weigh the important object, and will decide, as reason and the bias of genuine Christianity shall appear to preponderate. Of this, however, I am convinced that, were certain obstacles removed, such as the views of interest, the animosity of party, the blindness of prejudice, and those thick clouds which controversy has raised, it would then appear, that the Protestant Church of England and Catholics are divided by very thin partitions.

There are points of discipline also, which regulate conduct, and to which we pay obedience; as fasting on particular days, communion in one kind, celibacy of churchmen, use of the Latin language in public service, and other similar practices; but as these vary, and may be either altered or suppressed by due authority, they belong not to what is properly styled the *Faith* of Catholics.

Opinions also, whether regarding belief or practice, of particular schools or of particular

ticular divines, constitute a distinct and separate object. Great latitude in the forming of such opinions is allowed ; and consequently it will be often abused. It has been in the power of some men to give an undue weight to such opinions, whereby Catholics themselves have been too often imposed on. They have ignorantly confounded the inventions of fallible men with the unerring declarations of Heaven. Of this circumstance our enemies have many times taken an unfair advantage, and the faith of Catholics has suffered from the false representation.—

Some opinions may deserve respect, but others should be despised and reprobated. And it should be noticed, that most of the charges brought against us are founded on this false supposition; *that the opinions of private men, or of whole societies, are as much a part of our real creed, as the articles I have mentioned.* When all this extraneous matter, whether of discipline or of opinion is brought to a proper test, by the *Rule of Faith* I so much insist on, it will soon appear in what light it is to be considered. Were I to reject every opinion, hitherto discovered, and solely adhere to the articles of doctrine as above stated, I should

should be a *Catholic* in the strict and accurate acceptation of the word. Divines might censure me, Casuists might defame me, and the Pope might deny me the name of *Papist*; but my faith would still be pure, unimpaired, and Catholic.

Charges
against them

NOTWITHSTANDING this clear description of Catholic belief, many charges, of a very black and defamatory complexion, are perpetually urged against them; nor has it been possible to silence the voice of calumny.

It has been very recently asserted, that though we have taken an oath of allegiance and fidelity, we should not be tolerated in a Protestant country, because we have yet given no *security* for our good behaviour. It is a fixed maxim, say these men of refined discernment, in the Church of Rome, to which they all universally subscribe, "That no faith is to be kept with heretics; That the Pope can dispense with all oaths; and that every Priest has a discretionary power to forgive sins of every description."

We

We have answered; That we reject such doctrine as impious and unchristian; that it was never admitted by Catholics; that if any private person believed it, he was a bad man; and that no power, of whatever denomination, could make it lawful to violate such engagements, though contracted with Heretics, Jews, Turks, or Infidels.

We have answered; That we do not hold, the Pope has power to dispense with oaths; that the exercise of such power would be a violation of the unalterable laws of justice and truth; that it would be impious and invalid; and that no decisions, even of General Councils, can annul the sacred obligation of such engagements.

We have answered; That Priests have not a discretionary power to forgive sins; that to the sinner, who comes to them with *all* the dispositions of sincere repentance, we do believe they can, by the appointment of Heaven, grant absolution; but that it is *God alone*, who *interiorly* absolves the penitent, whilst his Ministers *exteriorly* exercise the function.

When

When we are accused of teaching that the Pope can depose Kings, and free their subjects from their allegiance; our answer is; That we abhor such maxims; that if Popes have sometimes exercised a deposing power, we condemn their conduct; that, as we acknowledge in him powers of spiritual jurisdiction only, we admit no interference from his court in the temporal concerns of state; and that we would oppose any secular attempts from him, with the same alacrity, as we would those of a French invader.

It is still urged, that we allow in him an extent of jurisdiction, which is not consistent with the established government of this realm.

With regard to that particular arrangement, which appoints the King head of the Church, we avow, it is true, our dissent from it. But as that relates only to the established Church, of which we are not members, our conduct is the same as that of other Dissenters, over whom his Majesty assumes no ecclesiastical jurisdiction.—The Bishop of Rome is our principal superior, as he is the supreme head
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of the Catholic Church. But all his power, being wholly *spiritual*, has no relation to civil government; it reaches to such matters as, we think, appertain not to the controul of Princes.—The state of religion with us is so very low and imperfect, that it is not easy to discover, wherein the Pope has room for the exercise of any part of his prerogative. We have no national Church, and we guide ourselves by the rule of ancient practice and discipline.—In Catholic countries must be looked for the proper display of the Papal power; and it will be found that its sphere of action is extremely bounded. They acknowledge in him a *primacy* of jurisdiction; but it is a primacy subjected to the controul of Canons and to the general order of established laws. His power is in no sense absolute. It is his duty to attend to the execution of established laws, and to take care that the Christian republic receive no injury. This is the office of a first magistrate in every well-regulated state. And to shew how limited his authority really is; we maintain that each Pastor in his parish, each Bishop in his diocese, each Metropolitan in his province, and each Patriarch in his

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nation,

nation, is possessed of a proper and essential jurisdiction, wholly uncontrollable by, and independent of, the See of Rome. They respect his primacy, but they have their rights and liberties as ancient and as sacred as are his own. Such was the order divinely established by Christ. The canonical *instalment* of Bishops and other higher Ministers is alone a branch of the Papal jurisdiction.—I know that, in former times principally, the Popes have exerted a very undue stretch of power. They had the passions of men; and the Christian world was too weak and too ignorant to oppose them. The consequences were at last fatal. It is vain to suppose that any establishments, committed to human direction, can be long free from abuses: It is our duty, by prudent and the most effectual means, to contribute to their reformation.—Such, as I have described, is the nature of the jurisdiction of Rome, and being such, England, I am very confident, has no reason to fear we shall ever aim to introduce a power incompatible with her privileges.

When we have been called Idolaters ;
we knew not what was meant by the
charge :

charge: For to God alone we pay our homage of *adoration*; but we think that particular *respect* is due to the first and best of his creatures.

We are accused of great uncharitableness in allowing Salvation to none but Catholics.—But this also is a mistaken notion. We say, I believe, no more, than do all other Christian Societies. Religion certainly is an affair of very serious consideration. When therefore a man, either neglects to inform himself, or when informed, refuses to follow the conviction of his mind, such a one, we say, is not in the way of Salvation. After mature enquiries, if I am convinced that the religion of England is the only true one, am I not obliged to become a Protestant? In similar circumstances, must not you likewise declare yourself a Catholic? Our meaning is, that no one can be saved out of the true Church; and as we consider the evidence of the truth of our religion to be great, that he who will not embrace truth, when he sees it, deserves not to be happy. God however is the searcher of hearts; he only can read those internal

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dispositions, on which rectitude of conduct alone depends.

Such are the answers, we have always given to these, and to other similar charges. We know, we have had amongst us many bad and weak men, who have often spoken and often acted wrong; but it is unfair to involve the innocent in the ways of the guilty. By this *ordeal*, the virtues and good qualities of every society upon earth would be utterly done away.—As Christians, therefore, we admit all the doctrines of divine Revelation; as Catholics, we submit our faith to the authority of that Church, which we think Christ has founded; as men, we profess our obedience to the moral precepts of reason and nature; and as subjects, the King has our allegiance, the laws our reverence, and the state may command our services.

Their
Priests.

THE account I have given of the religion of Catholics naturally leads me to their Ministers. On this head I could wish to supply all possible information. Popish Priests are generally considered as a fair game, at which the shafts of satire and

and malevolence may be thrown with impunity. Like other objects, this also has two sides: The equitable spectator will wish to view both.

By an arrangement, which took place in the reign of James the Second, England was divided into four districts, and a Bishop was appointed to preside over each. They had then 1000l. per ann. settled on each of them, out of the Exchequer: but this only continued till the Revolution, when they were reduced to the necessity of supporting themselves by the best means in their power. Since that time, the same regulation with regard to numbers has continued; and as they have no particular place of residence allotted, each Bishop generally chuses to live in the most central and convenient situation. Their office is, to attend to the small concerns of their respective districts; to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation; to provide the different congregations with Priests; and to take care that these perform their duties, and behave in a manner becoming the character of Churchmen. It has been said by a peevish writer, “ That *Popish Bishops* go about, and exercise every
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part of their function, without offence, and without observation." This is an unfair representation: For it is in the most private manner that any part of their function is exercised; and as they possess none of the insignia of the Episcopal order, their *goings about* do not distinguish them from other men. Could modern Christians be inspired with the holy ambition of emulating the virtues of the apostolic ages, our Catholic Bishops have, surely, the noblest field before them. They are not exposed to the allurements of worldly temptations; and all their treasures are in heaven. One hundred pounds per annum is more than equal to the revenue of their Episcopal Sees. Will the author of the *Confessional*, from whom the above remark is taken, be willing to exchange his *Arch-deaconry* of Cleveland for the *Mitre* of these Popish Bishops?

As far as I can rely on my information, which I think is accurate, the number of Priests, now employed, is about 360. Their distribution is as follows.—In the northern district, which takes in the counties of Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmoreland, Durham, York, Lancaster, and

and Chester, there are about 167. Of these 48 are Ex-Jesuits. Three places are now vacant. This district contains the greatest number of Priests, and also the greatest number of Catholics; but not in proportion to the number of Clergy; many being private Chaplains to Gentlemen, where there are no congregations. Since their dissolution, nine places have been given up by the Ex-Jesuits, two of which are not likely ever to be revived.

In the midland district, are about 90 Priests; 28 of whom are Ex-Jesuits. There are now fourteen places vacant. This district declines very fast, as appears from the great number of congregations now without Priests. Most of these have been vacant for some time, and no Clergymen unengaged have hitherto been found to supply them; though some of them are Gentlemen's houses; by which means some families are obliged to go from five to ten miles, on Sundays, to Chapel. It may be noticed that this district, though composed of the greatest number of counties, and those mostly large, to the amount of sixteen, contains only 8,460 Catholics, which
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is computed to be about two thirds of what there were thirty or forty years ago.

The western district contains about 44 Priests; 23 are Ex-Jesuits. There is one place vacant, and has been so for some time; no person can be found to occupy it. This district is the thinnest of Catholics of any in England, though its extent be great. It contains eight English counties, and the whole of North and South-Wales.

The London district, comprising nine counties, has 58 Priests; 11 are Ex-Jesuits. There are five places vacant. This district has also diminished, and is declining very fast.

These Priests, whose number and distribution I have given, either live as Chaplains in the families of Gentlemen, and have the care of the little congregations round them; or else they reside in towns, or in some country-places, where funds have been settled for their support. The Chapels are in their own houses. From many places being now vacant, as I have noticed, where Priests were formerly kept, it is evident that their number is greatly
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on the decrease. The Jesuits also are daily dying away; nor is there any succession to supply their places. In the lapse of a few years, we shall see a very great additional falling off. Never, surely, was there a wilder fancy than the common cry of the growth of Popery, and of the great influx of Priests, since the passing of the late act in favour of Catholics!

Voluntary poverty is generally esteemed a virtue of high evangelical merit; but when involuntary, it loses its meritorious character, and may be ranked among the miseries of human life. If Catholic Priests are disposed to make a virtue of necessity, like their Bishops, they will meet with no obstacle in their progress to perfection. Twenty pounds per annum is thought a very handsome salary for a Gentleman's Chaplain; and if the rural curate have twenty more, to keep himself, his horse, and his servant, it will be said, he is very well provided. Some may have small annuities from their own families; but this is not common.—From men thus broken by penury, the frowns of an imperious patron, or by hard labour in the service of their neighbour, government has little reason, I think,

think, to apprehend machinations against the state; nor should the established Church envy their condition, or tremble for the subversion of her Hierarchy.

Our Priests, in their general character, are upright and sincere: But narrowed by a bad education, they contract early prejudices, which they very seldom afterwards deposite. The theological lumber of the schools supplies, in their minds, the place of more useful furniture. Moderately skilled in the Latin and Greek languages, they know nothing of their own; nor do they become sensible of their manifold deficiencies, till it be too late to attempt improvement. They are bred up in the persuasion that, on coming to England, they are to meet with racks and persecution: They land, therefore, as in an enemy's country, cautious, diffident, and suspicious. A man truly orthodox flies heretical company; he fears to be contaminated; and he would not receive instruction from so foul a source. A Priest is seldom seen in the society of Protestants. The Catholics, he is told to herd with, either are unable to improve him, or if able, they are seldom willing. Contracted
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in his circumstances, he has not the means of drawing information from books; and unfashioned in the forms of elegant life, his company is not asked for. Thus denied all occasions of improvement, if his native dispositions will allow him, he soon sits down sullenly contented, and looks no further. If he ever had abilities, disuse will, in a short time, lay them asleep; and at sixty he will be found the same man he was at twenty-five.—It is the complaint of our Gentry, that Priests are rough and unsociable: They would be less so, perhaps, if their patrons were less proud, less ignorant, and less imperious. On both sides are faults, which should be corrected. That day is passed, when the counsel of the Priesthood was officiously sought after; when, from the cottage to the throne, it pervaded every department in life. The employment did not make them better men; and their employers are deservedly styled ignorant and weak-minded bigots. A Churchman who, in the discharge of his duty, is regular, exemplary, and manly, must be respected; if he be ill-treated, it will only be by such, whose frowns will do him more honour than their smiles.

It is often said, that Popish Priests have an unbounded zeal for making Profelytes. Were it true, I see no reproach in the charge. It proves that they are sincere in their religious belief; that they esteem themselves in the best way; and that they wish to impart to others the important truths of salvation. The man of zeal, and only this man, will, in every religion, strive to make converts; and when evidently he is not actuated by motives of interest or some worldly pursuit, his only aim can be the good of his neighbour. If Priests ever possessed the spirit complained of, it has, I am sure, either long since evaporated, or is become very unsuccessful; for the number of those, who conform to the established Church, is far beyond those who come over to us. Real zeal is not a lasting impulse, when there is not some passion to give it strength; and in what are we benefited by an increase of numbers? To instruct those who are born Catholics; to make them good Christians and good Citizens, is a task by itself sufficiently interesting; we are already too many to suffer; and in us too many are already lost to the service of our country.

It is a very fortunate circumstance, in the discipline of the Catholic Church, that Priests are forbidden to marry. They who now can hardly maintain themselves, would not easily provide for a wife and children. Protestants often inveigh against this celibacy of our Churchmen; but it would be well, I believe, if many of theirs continued single: Where shall the unprovided offspring of a deceased Clergyman find relief from penury and distress? Luther indeed did well to condemn a practice, he was not willing to follow; and his marriage with a Nun was to his disciples a convincing proof, that celibacy was no virtue.

The influence, which Priests have it in their power still to acquire from the use of *confession*, it must be allowed, is very great. Take but once fast hold of a man's conscience, and you may lead him where you please. It is therefore, in our Church, a concern of the greatest moment, that Priests be well-instructed, and that they be good men. When this is the case, they become a powerful engine, whereby religion may be greatly advanced, and much public utility derived to the state.

Confession

Confession is a great check to vice, and it promotes the practice of virtue. It may be abused; as the best things too often are. Abstracting from all divine institution, were I to found a commonwealth, a law, obliging all my subjects to frequent confession of their sins, should be a principal ordinance. But the choice of my Priests should have my peculiar care. I would not, however, myself be found often in their company; for the Priest who holds in his hand the conscience of his Prince, too often meddles in the temporal concerns of state, which belong not to him,

The Jesuits, from the day of their institution, raised, through the Christian world, a suspicious jealousy, which they were never careful to suppress; they also raised an admiration of their zeal and of their unbounded activity. In our penal statutes they are marked out as a body of men wholly distinct from other Priests. It was thought, that they held principles inimical to the rights of mankind, and that their designs against Princes and their States were of the most deleterious complexion. There was no truth in this imagination. They had amongst them, indeed,

deed, Divines of wild fancy; they had loose and indulgent Casuists; and they had men of dangerous activity. Where the weaknesses and common passions to which our nature is subject, are allowed to operate, things could not be otherwise; and the Jesuits were not more reprehensible, than are all other societies of men. The influence, which their zeal, their soft insinuation, and their abilities, acquired them, was, in every walk of life, amazingly extensive. It was often productive of great good, and it was sometimes productive of great evil. They aspired, I think, too high; and the rapidity of their fall could only be equalled by that of their ascent. To the Protestant Church they were always particularly odious: They were purposely raised to oppose the progress, and to combat the opinions, of the first Reformers. Their attachment to the See of Rome was great; and in them the Papal prerogative had always experienced the firmest support. It was, therefore, matter of astonishment when the Roman Pontiff pronounced their dissolution. He was either a bad politician, or he was compelled to do it.—In abilities the Jesuits were thought to surpass all other

other religious orders; but because they wanted prudence to rein their ambition, and to moderate their career of power, they fell,—and were not pitied.—The English Jesuits were, I think, rather inferior to their brethren in other parts of Europe. Of this many reasons might be assigned. But there was a certain sameness in manners, and a peculiar cast of features, which generally marked every member of the Society. Among the Tea-shrubs in China, in the missions of Chili, in the gardens of Versailles, or in a cottage in Lancashire, a Jesuit was a distinguishable man.—The few still remaining, daily dying off, in the course of some years, their generation will be extinct, and their name almost forgotten. We shall then perhaps see reason to lament their suppression. At all events, it is now time to drop those idle fears, which the phantom of Jesuitical craft and machinations formerly gave rise to.

Their
Schools in
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IT was a groundless rumour, which lately prevailed, that Catholics were opening schools in all parts of the kingdom, whereby the rising generation of Protestants

stants were all to be perverted to the errors of Popery. The real fact is, that we have not opened one new school since the year 1778. The whole number of those which we have, are, I think, but three, at least those of any note. There is one in Hertfordshire; one near Birmingham in Warwickshire; and a third near Wolverhampton in Staffordshire. In London are some day-schools; and in other parts may be, perhaps, little establishments, where an old woman gives lectures on the Horn-book and the Art of Spelling. As her lessons convey no documents of treason or sedition, government need not watch her with any anxious attention.—At the two first mentioned schools are generally about twenty or thirty boys, who leave them about the age of twelve or fourteen. That in Staffordshire is far the most numerous. Its design is to give some education to children of a lower class. They learn their religion, and such other things, as may qualify them for trade and the usual business of life. When it can be avoided, they never admit Protestants, from an apprehension that it might give offence; as also from a well-grounded suspicion, that it would tend gradually to weaken the

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religious principles of the Catholic boys. It is to me astonishing, that Protestants can be found, who, were it in their power, would deprive us even of this small privilege of educating our own children ! The ideas of such a man are a disgrace to human nature. *Ultimus suorum moriatur !* It was the wish of the ancients to their greatest enemies.

Their
Foreign
Schools.

SOON after the accession of Queen Elizabeth, when Catholics had lost all hopes of re-establishment ; and when by severe statutes the practice of their religion was prohibited, and themselves were not allowed to receive education at home ; many of them retired abroad, and, by degrees, associated into regular communities. In 1568, Dr. Allan, afterwards made Cardinal, founded a College for the English at Douay, a town in Flanders, then subject to the Spanish King ; and in process of time, other Colleges and places of education were established in France, Spain, and Portugal.—The remains likewise of the religious orders, who had been dispersed at the suppression of Monasteries, collected themselves, and formed into communities.

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The first object of these different establishments was, to provide Ministers for the support of their religion in England, and in a secondary view, to give education to the Catholic youth. Young men, therefore, soon repaired thither ; some of them took orders, and then returned to their own country. To frustrate this scheme, which was the only means now left of preserving from utter ruin the small remains of Catholicity in England, many very severe statutes were made by Elizabeth and her successors. However, in spite of this opposition, and of the various attempts then made to prevail on the different Princes to expel them their territories, they stood, and exist to the present hour. It was surely a stretch of cruel despotism, thus to subject those, who should send their children abroad, to hard penalties, and, at the same time, not to allow them to be educated at home, unless they took oaths, which in their consciences they thought unlawful !

The men whom, for many succeeding years, these Seminaries sent into England, were very able and informed. A general spirit of enquiry, especially in matters of

religion, had begun to call into life those mental powers, which, for whole centuries back, had slept in lazy indolence. Controversy became the fashionable occupation of the learned; and true religion has many obligations to their laborious efforts. The English Priests eagerly engaged in those disputes of religion with their Protestant antagonists; and from the writings they left behind them, it appears, they were well-skilled in the arts of controversy. There is indeed an acrimony and a harshness of reflection in their works, which, to judge from modern habits, would rather irritate, than produce sentiments of moderation and mutual forbearance. But this was the stern character of the age; and it may, I believe, at all times be doubted, whether the object of polemic writers is not rather to foil their adversary and to triumph, than, from the love of truth, to combat error, and to convince, from the godlike motive of doing good.

The present state of these establishments is as follows:—The College at Douay founded, as I said, in 1568, is the most considerable, and is governed by a President

fident and other Superiors, all of the English nation. It belongs to the secular Clergy; and the number of students is generally above a hundred. As its design is to form Churchmen, and to give an academical education to the sons of Gentlemen, its course of studies has been consequently adapted to this double purpose. But the complaint is, that its plan is not proportioned to the present improved state of things; that the Priests, who come from thence, are ill-provided with that learning, which other Universities can now supply; and that young men, after eight years application, return home, very superficially acquainted with the Latin and Greek authors, and totally destitute of all other science.—General ideas, and the habits of mankind, have certainly undergone a great revolution; it is proper, therefore, that modes of education should vary, under skilful and prudent direction. Instructions should be taken from every quarter, and the work of improvement begun, without further loss of time. The misfortune however is, that to reform a College would be a thirteenth labour for Hercules. The cleansing the stable of King Augeas,

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which held three thousand oxen, and had not been emptied for thirty years, was, compared with this, but a boyish achievement.—The revenue of this College is very moderate; and the pension, which provides every thing, is but of twenty pounds per annum.

The Priests from this house are the most numerous, and from them I principally drew those outlines of sacerdotal character, which the reader already has seen. They are open, disinterested, religious, and laborious; steady in the discharge of their duties, fond of their profession, and emulous of supporting the character of primitive Churchmen: But they are austere in their principles, confined in their ideas, ignorant of the world, and unpleasant in their manners.

The Clergy have also other seminaries, of inferior distinction, at Paris, at Valladolid in Old Castile, at Rome, and at Lisbon. The number of students in these places is inconsiderable. The distance from England is great, and, abstracting from the expence of so long a journey, parents are not inclined to send their children so far

far from home. The design of all these establishments is solely to educate Churchmen. At Paris are many opportunities of improvement, which that learned University supplies. The mode of education in the other houses is copied from that of Douay; and their Priests, barring the local peculiarities they contract, are greatly in the same model. It is surely time to give new life to this antiquated form: But we want an artist bold enough to attempt it. When Prometheus had kneaded into shape his man of clay, he stole fire from Heaven to animate it.

Whilst the Jesuits stood, St. Omer was their great school for classical improvement; and they supplied England with many able and active Churchmen. At the expulsion of that body from France, their College was given to the Clergy of Douay: In whose hands it now is; but it answers little purpose. English Catholics are not sufficiently numerous to supply scholars for so many houses.—The Jesuits themselves first retired to Bruges, in the Austrian Netherlands, where they opened another College; but, on their total suppression a few years after, that house also
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was dissolved, together with every other foundation they possessed. They then erected an Academy at Liege, (for their spirit of enterprize was not to be broken) under the protection of the Bishop and Prince of that place. They are now no longer Jesuits; but their Academy is in great estimation, and the children of our Catholic gentry principally resort thither for education. However, as their object is not to form Churchmen, (for they think the Church has used them ill) but to instruct youth in the fashionable arts of polished life, the order of Aaron will receive little assistance from their labours.

The Monks of the order of Saint Benedict have also houses abroad, and their Priests come to England. There are four Convents now belonging to them, three in France, and one in Germany, but their numbers are small. In that at Douay is a school for classical education, where are generally about thirty students. From these different places but few Priests return to England; it being an essential part of the Monkish institute to keep choir, for which business a considerable number of stout lungs is requisite.

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The Friars of the order of Saint Francis have likewise a Convent at Douay, which supplies some Priests. Within these few years, they have greatly decreased, owing to the wise regulations France has adopted for the reduction of religious orders, as also because the true spirit of Friarism is much abated. The source likewise, from which formerly they drew a competent subsistence, is almost dried up; I mean the liberal contributions of the public. It begins to be a prevailing notion, that the earthly substance of families can be expended to better purpose, than in maintaining men, who have no return to make to their benefactors, but a promise of a place in paradise, which, it is now discovered, they cannot dispose of; and whose lives, though really more regular than represented, seem not to merit such partial indulgence.

There is also a third order, which now begins rather to increase. The Dominicans, since the suppression of the Jesuits, have grown into more visible form: They have a school near Brussels, and a small Convent at Louvain, in the Austrian territo-

ries. Some Priests of this order are likewise in England.

Such is the present state of Catholic establishments abroad, and from them come all the Churchmen at this day in England. It is rather a motley congregation; and they are, and ever have been, much divided by local prejudices of education, views of interest, low jealousies, pretensions to partial favour, and the jars of such selfish passions, as have long had prescriptive possession of the breasts of Churchmen. It would be well, if with their cassocks, their cowls, and their capuches, they would also leave behind them the weaknesses just mentioned, and honestly unite in one christian plan of serving their neighbour, and of discharging the several duties of religion.—It was in these seminaries that was chiefly kept alive that Jacobitical folly, which, like an *ignis fatuus*, led the Catholics of England almost to the brink of ruin. It cannot raise surprise, because it is an obvious effect of circumstances, but it is morally impossible that, whilst this system of foreign education continues, English Catholics can entertain the proper notions of Englishmen.

Englishmen. They must contract something of the manners, and something, I fear, of the principles of those countries, which give them so hospitable a retreat. Yet this effect is by no means so sensible, as from speculation one is induced to believe. The return is not very grateful, but it is observable, that our English boys never lose that antipathy to Frenchmen and French manners, which, I trust, is constitutionally innate. They are, however, greatly exposed, and the experiment should not be tried. It is surely as impolitic, as it is cruel, to retain those penal statutes, by which British subjects are compelled to implore the protection of France, or to deny education to their own children?

THE Ladies would be displeased, were I to take no notice of their foreign establishments. At the time that houses of refuge were provided for the men, whom persecution forced from home, some Ladies of singular zeal, who had also retired from England, attempted to form communities; and their success was great. At this day, the English Nunneries abroad

Their Nunneries.

are no less than twenty-one. France and the Low Countries have almost the whole number. It is incredible, how they have been able to support themselves; for tho' in many houses their numbers are very thin, yet they go on, braving all the storms of adverse fortune. A high opinion of monastic perfection, fondness for the veil, and, above all, a thought that they suffer on account of religion, are the charms which have filled their cloisters; or at least have preserved them from ruin. It is a misfortune, that England should be deprived of so many fair examples of virtue: Their presence would surely be productive of more real advantage, than their absence; though we have all great confidence in their prayers.—To them our young Ladies are sent for education: Some never return, joining themselves to the holy choirs of virgins; and the few, who are given to the world, become the forlorn hope of the Catholic cause.—Nuns are ill-adapted to the business of education, when this is supposed to consist of precepts and general instruction, with which they cannot be acquainted. Having retired from the world, before they knew it, inspiration only can teach them

them the art of preparing others for its important occupations. Yet this they profess to do, or, in the capacity of instructors, they profess nothing.

Sensible as I am, that no mode of education can be less adapted to improve the mind, and to instil such principles as may form it to the business of life, yet so it happens, that few Ladies have higher pretensions to the palm of female perfection, than have many of the Catholic persuasion. The public knows the truth of this observation. A display of their characters would, I know, offend their modesty; otherwise I would say, that as wives, as mothers, as citizens, and as christians, they stand unrivalled. One is sometimes tempted to suspect that, in molding the soft texture of their minds, nature, too kindly partial, threw in some elements, which otherwise might have fallen to the share of their husbands. — The instructions of the cloister are not favourable to the growth of these virtues; but it is usual with us, not to expose them to public notice, which often blasts the early flower, till maturer age has ripened them into more secure perfection. To this circumstance I principally
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ascribe an effect, which otherwise cannot be accounted for.

If my advice might be followed, I would propose, if Nuns must be, that, after some years of holy retirement, they would return, with missionary powers, to this land of heretics: Their preaching would make more proselytes than a legion of Friars; and their example would be a fair path for us all to walk in.—The Legislature will at last surely relax those Gothic laws, which send into exile so many of their amiable fellow-subjects. Could they receive proper education at home, their thoughts would never turn to cloisters; and if, in lieu, they make it high treason against the state to put on the monastic veil, at least before the age of fifty, it will be a favour done to the rising generation of English Catholics.

Conclusion. IT is time to close this short *view* of English Catholics. I have said whatever seemed necessary on the subject; and I have said it freely. I pretend not to think myself void of all partiality, because I pretend not to be divested of human feelings;

feelings; but of this I am confident, that partiality to my own persuasion has not prevailed on me, to conceal any truth, to disguise any error, or to throw a veil over any weakness. I have blamed where I thought it reasonable; and I have praised where there was merit. Throughout it was my object to support the character of a candid plain-speaking man. If either Catholics or Protestants take offence, it will not give me one uneasy thought. I shall pity men, whose eyes are too weak to bear the impression of Truth, however serene the medium may be, through which it passes. I could have entered into more minute details; and I could have given a much wider span to my reflections; but I thought an object, contracted to a smaller point, was best adapted to produce the effect, I had in view.

It was my design to demonstrate, that neither Church nor State had any thing to fear from English Catholics: and to this end, I brought forward every species of materials, which my sources of information could supply, and which had any tendency to illustrate the point. I described the Catholics as they really are; and
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from this description if it be not evident to the weakest sight, *that all is secure*, there must be a timidity in Englishmen; that will shudder at the most feeble suggestions of fancy. It is related, I think, as an instance of singular phrenzy in the heroic Ajax, that he took a flock of sheep for a host of enemies: The imagination of the Poet is realized in the conduct of Great-Britain. For two whole centuries, we have been harmless and unoffending; and at the present hour, were an occasion offered, there is not a hand amongst us, which would be raised, but in defence of his country:

Things being so, there is but one inference; and this is, That the cry, which was lately heard, and which is industriously kept up, was the cry of malevolence or fanaticism; and that the laws which, like the naked sword over the head of Democles, are held out against us, are cruel, unjust, and tyrannical.—It has been seen, that no just cause was ever given to provoke the enactment of such laws: But now even that plea subsists no longer, by which the multitude was deluded, and the bad designs of party were screened from detection. It is
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not said, that we are in actual conspiracy against the state, and that schemes of assassination are formed; but it is still said, and it is still believed, that our principles have a natural tendency to such dark works; and that it is not from want of will, but of power, that we do not attempt to place the crown of this realm on the head of a tyrant, or to add it to the triple Tiara of the Roman Pontiff. *Pudet hæc opprobria vobis*: I am really ashamed in the reflection, that men can now be weak enough to indulge such fancies, or can allow themselves the liberty of such childish language. If the view of these absurdities raises my indignation, it is an honest indignation, which becomes me; and I would rather have four legs, and feed on grass, than not freely censure, what I think is an oppression of innocence, and a degradation of human reason. The conduct of Catholics is irreproachable; they profess the most sincere attachment to the civil constitution of this realm; they reprobate the most distant belief of such doctrines as are laid to their charge: Still they are not believed; still the same accusations are repeated; still, under the weak pretence of holding such tenets, they are

oppressed; and still the same infamous code of laws is permitted to remain in full force against them !

It might be expected, that the eyes of this nation should now open to the humane and Christian doctrine of general Toleration, on the most extensive plan. They should set an example to the other kingdoms of the earth. If we really are that enlightened, that liberal, that humane, that philosophic people, which we so often affect to style ourselves, our own conduct at least should not give the first lie to the language of our lips.—My ideas are not perhaps adapted to the present state of received notions; I believe, they are only fitted to the meridian of Utopia; but had I the power, I would give the utmost latitude of profession and practice to all religions, which have votaries in any part of the terraqueous globe. Not only the followers of Mahomet, and the deluded children of Moses, should not be molested, but they should be encouraged to come amongst us; and the Sun of England should shine with equal rays on all the descendants of Adam. It is only in such circumstances that Truth can fairly exert her native powers. Allow
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all men to think freely, and to act consistently with what they think; and it cannot be, but truth must prevail over error. There would then be no motive for the disguise of sentiments; the mind would receive no undue bias; views of interest would not warp our conceptions; but plain, genuine, unadorned truth would present herself in all her amiable and divine simplicity of form: Religion, with its attendant virtues, would challenge our first belief; and the religion of our choice would *necessarily* be the Christian. Variations in faith might still continue; but these would gradually die away, or at least all distinctions would cease to be odious. The Protestant would sit down by the Catholic; they would discuss, in the language of friendship, their mutual difficulties; and the Gentoo, the Jew, and the Infidel, charmed with a religion, which taught all men to be friends, would earnestly apply to receive instruction in so humane a belief.

I well know such a scheme could not be introduced in the face of an *established Church*; but for that very reason, I would have no religion established by *form of law*.

That mode of faith, which produced the best subjects, should receive peculiar encouragement; and, in the eye of a statesman, this circumstance alone should be the test of its superior excellence. In any other view, the mixing of politics in the concerns of religion, and the granting exclusive favours to a national Church, have ever produced much evil, and never any good. It has confounded objects, in themselves essentially distinct; it has encouraged the growth of every selfish passion; and it has put a bar to the exertions of sincere, honest, and unpliant virtue. The influence of religious worship over the morals and manners of mankind, has made it necessary, it is said, for politicians to court the interest and good-will of Churchmen: They have therefore granted peculiar privileges to some leading sect, and have established their belief by the firm sanction of law: "You only, said they, shall partake of the loaves and fishes."—This certainly is a very confined and mistaken notion. Where can be the policy of an arrangement which, by granting partial favours, secures indeed the attachment of one party, but which forfeits the esteem of

of the rest, by a denial of privileges to which all have an equal right?

But without insisting on these ideas of general justice, general humanity, and general policy; can any reason be now assigned, why Catholics should not enjoy the common rights of Toleration? What is given to other Dissenters, should be given to them—because they deserve it. Still, however, I am willing to make some allowance to the prejudices of the multitude. The name of *Papist* is odious to them, and as long as this impression lasts, it would be wrong to insult their feelings. As members of society, it is our duty to labour, that abuses be corrected, that errors be removed, that mistakes be rectified, and that no man suffer wrongfully. The prejudices of the vulgar, and their idle alarms, would soon die away, were these objects attended to by those, whose care it is to instruct and to educate. But it is the endeavour rather of these men, not to mitigate acrimony and to soften prejudice, but to aggravate and to encrease both, by malevolent aspersions and the repetition of declamatory invectives. Would English Protestants openly avow
their

their sentiments ; would they say, as do their amiable Scottish brethren, that they mean to persecute and to exterminate the small remains of Popery ; we should not be at a loss what plan to adopt. I would rather retire to the frozen regions of Siberia, which would receive me with more hospitality, and where I could think and act with the freedom of a man.—It is not our desire to be put on a level with other subjects ; because, in the year 1780, Britain is not sufficiently enlightened to view all men with an equal eye : We shall be satisfied in the least and the lowest condition.—I mean not to point out such measures, as might seem best adapted to give us relief. The penal laws against us should surely be repealed. Let parliament then adopt that plan, which may at once quiet the nation, in their fears of the growth of Popery, and may give that indulgence to Catholics, which, as good and as loyal subjects, they are privileged to expect.

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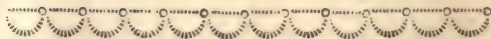
REFLECTIONS,

ADDRESSED TO

The Rev. JOHN HAWKINS,

BY THE

Rev. JOSEPH BERINGTON.





REFLECTIONS

ADDRESSED TO

The Rev. JOHN HAWKINS.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN EXPOSITION OF

Roman Catholic Principles,

IN REFERENCE TO

GOD AND THE COUNTRY.

By the Rev. JOSEPH BERINGTON.

Il y a plaisir d'être dans un vaisseau battu de l'orage,
lors qu'on est assuré qu'il ne périra point.

PASCAL.

BIRMINGHAM: PRINTED BY M. SWINNEY:

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M,DCC,LXXXV.

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The P R E F A C E.

THE following REFLECTIONS, though addressed to a particular person, are meant, as is well known, for the public : not that the public will care about them, but some few of it perhaps may, and for such they are designed. To the Catholics of Worcester it might be proper to recommend myself; but if they have only tasted of all the rich dainties, that have been laid before them, from their chaplain to their chaplain's friend, cloyed surely they are already. I would not willingly add to their surfeit.

Had I not been alone in the country, in the gloomy month of November, these *reflections* probably had never risen into any visible form : nor would it have signified. The discussion indeed of such matters may be thought
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an extraordinary cure for melancholy ; nor would I recommend it to all patients ; but our tastes are various, and it is well they should.—Convinced however I am, that such works, as the *appeal* of Mr. Hawkins, should not be allowed to pass unnoticed, at any season. It would soon be said that he, who had received his education amongst us, certainly knew our belief, and had stated it fairly : and fairness there sometimes is ; but it is so broken, and so mixed up with trash, and a thousand flippant observations, that it is not easy to discover at what he aims. The justification of the step he had taken, I presume, was his first object ; but why such a fuss about an event so little interesting ? He might have reflected that the actions of an honest man never require a long apology. When it is considered how hard is the fate of the Roman Catholics of this country ; I own it raises my surprise that any one, who is not dead to the common impressions of humanity, can wish to aggravate their painful situation. Yet this is done by every writer
and

and preacher who declaims against popery : he means to keep alive those vulgar prejudices, under which we have so long suffered. Is your happiness to increase in proportion as I become miserable ? In all this I see an illiberality which, God be praised, I am not disposed to imitate. Some virtues there may be, and those of the most amiable nature, which flourish best under oppression ; if so, may the Catholics of England ever be oppressed ! Honest, liberal, humane and generous now they are : in prosperity they might cease to be so.

Since in the year 1780, I published a Short view of the *State and behaviour of English Catholics from the reformation* to that period, I have often re-considered the subject in detail, and have seen reason to be satisfied with that general statement of facts. The work might be resumed on a much larger scale, and I have collected some materials towards it. But it is on the reign of Elizabeth that the catholic historian should principally dwell. From the conduct of
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his ancestors, at that trying period, he would show, how little they merited the treatment that fell upon them, and consequently that the laws of her reign were tyrannical and unjust. He would allow that, in one instance indeed, they were highly blameable; but that was, when power was in their hands, and yet they were pusillanimous or impolitic enough to permit the spurious offspring of Henry, whose dispositions they well knew, to mount the imperial throne of England. The consequences of this palpable misconduct they and their children have severely felt. Our fellow-sufferers in France, he would say, in similar circumstances, would have played a better game.

During the two years I lately spent in that country, I had many favourable opportunities of observing the state of its protestant inhabitants; and I have briefly given the result of those observations. Their situation, on the whole, is far preferable to ours, and it is likely to improve every day. The
body

body of churchmen seems as yet rather averse ; but that aversion also wears away, and it is clear that something will soon be done to meliorate their condition. The Calvinism of the reformed church in France has greatly departed from its original standard ; otherwise, I suspect, under any toleration, they would find it very difficult to keep pace with the views of absolute monarchy.

But in no country under heaven is to be found that multiplicity of *oaths*, which are at every turn administered in Great Britain. It should seem as if the legislature had discovered something so infamously base in the character of an Englishman, that nothing but the most extraordinary ties could bind him to his duty. Is he to be admitted to any office civil or military ; is he to receive any pay by patent or grant from the king ; is he to enter on any command or place of trust ? &c. &c. the *sacrament* must be taken ; but this will not suffice : he must then take the oath of *allegiance*, then that of *supre-*
 b 2 *macy*,

macy, then that of *abjuration*; but he is not yet to be trusted; he must likewise *DECLARE that he does not believe in transubstantiation*. God in heaven!

Such proceedings are surely deordinate. What have the religious ideas of a man's conscience to say to his duties as a subject or citizen? He, whom a simple oath of allegiance cannot bind, will be tied by nothing. But rather let there be no oaths at all.—The frequency of them has a pernicious effect, as must be evident to the most superficial observer in this country. However, some of them serve to keep the papists in a state of bondage, and the views of legislators are thus fulfilled.—We want a treatise on this business of oaths.

A few days ago was put into my hands a small pamphlet, published two or three years ago, against the church of Rome, by Dr. Porteus, Bishop of Chester: I had not seen it, and a wish was expressed that I would notice it on this occasion. This I cannot pretend to do. I am not the champion of my party, nor am
I quix-

I quixotishly enough disposed to assail every windmill that an accidental blast may put into motion.—The contents of this tract, the worthy Prelate informs us, he extracted from Archbishop Secker's FIVE SERMONS AGAINST POPERY. Why not rather give us his own ideas on the subject; or did he think an attack upon us wanted the sanction of that venerable name?

FIVE SERMONS AGAINST POPERY! and what injury had popery ever done to his Grace of Canterbury? From that source were to him derived that dignity, those almost unbounded powers, which belong to his see. The heads of the church have surely reason to rejoice that Popery, not Calvinism, preceded their establishment: and, from the reflection, something like gratitude might rather be expected.

Why Dr. Porteus published the gleanings of these fretful sermons, I know not. He had found that the Catholics of his diocese were encreased, but that only in proportion with general

ral

ral population. The statement of this fact, as he gave it in before the House of Lords, was, I remember, fair and generous. As the Catholics in Lancashire are numerous, some zealot perhaps, from amongst them, had given offence to his Lordship. I hope it was so : the attack otherwise was unmerited and disingenuous. But on no supposition can some things in that pamphlet be justified ; and hardly, I think, can an English Prelate persuade himself to ascribe that unerrancy to the words of the Primate of all England, which an Italian Catholic would refuse to the Pope of Rome.

FIVE SERMONS AGAINST POPERY ! and this is Christian moderation ; this is brotherly forbearance ; and this is fellow-feeling for mutual weaknesses ! When has a Primate of France left behind him sermons against Protestants ? But the religion of Protestants is pure and evangelical, that of Catholics base and Antichristian. Church of England, “ first draw the beam out of thy own
“ eye, and then thou shalt see to draw
“ the mote out of thy brother’s eye.”

Being

Being thus in possession of clear sight, what a new order of things would rise before the members of this church ! They would look with surprise at the hard and intolerant treatment, they had so long shewn to their mother's children, and, by future lenity, they would wish to make compensation for it. The severe statutes enacted against them they would view with horror. " Shall we, they would say, whose very existence is founded on liberty of choice, oppress others, because they do not think as we do ? They are good subjects, and have given every proof, in their power, of being so ; if they have not done more, it is, because we would not permit them. These laws, for the honour of our church, must be repealed ; and this repeal shall be our own work."—Warm with these sentiments, the established church, with the Primates at their head, present a petition to both Houses of Parliament, praying that all oppression may cease in the land, and that every man be free to chuse and to practise the religion of his conscience. The liberty we take
to

to ourselves, shall we refuse it to others? they would say.—Europe, with complacency, would behold this event, and France would hasten to imitate the example of her generous rival.

R E F L E C -



REFLECTIONS, &c.

REVEREND SIR,

I HAVE been reading your *Appeal* Introduction.
to Scripture, Reason and Tradition,
in Support of the Doctrines contained in a
Letter to the Roman Catholics of the City
of Worcester.—Such is the title of your
work. How many *Appeals* have long
since been made to those great Sources
of Knowledge, and yet how undecided
is mankind with regard to the doctrines
in litigation! Truth surely is an un-
certain phantom; or there is some-
thing in the human mind with which
it cannot coalesce, however striking its
form may be, or however favourable
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the dispositions, which the candid enquirer brings to the discussion. I have read almost every controvertist of note who, during these two last centuries, has written on religion, and I am only the more confirmed in my first principles: you perhaps have not read as many, and yet you saw sufficient reason to withdraw yourself from the belief of your fathers. I may presume we were both equally well disposed to adopt the doctrine, which should appear most evidently deduced from scripture, reason, and tradition. I can answer for myself. Had not such been the temper of my mind, hardly, I think, should I have attempted the dreary journey. The country was almost impracticable, and many of its roads nearly choked up with rubbish. But I have been reading your *Appeal*, and that is now the point before me.

It does not quite resemble the land I have mentioned; some drooping flowers grow on the path; but alas! there are weeds, and briers obstructed my passage. Where is the road without them?

them? Seriously, I read your *Appeal* with some pleasure; but on reflection, I found that pleasure was of such a mixed nature, that it might almost be taken for pain. Through the whole there is occasionally an appearance of moderation, and as far as that goes, it has my warmest praises. Fewer breaks in that amiable quality would have done you no discredit; sometimes I thought it had the appearance of affectation. In your *Preface* is a real liberality that put me in good humour; there you speak like an honest man, who disclaims all sinister means of defending a cause, which he thinks its own merits render strong enough. When Protestant writers have descended to calumny and misrepresentation; when they have charged us with the profession of tenets, which we never held, I own, I despised such men; and I said, their cause was weak. If they were ignorant of our doctrines, why not inform themselves better? But if they dared, in the eye of conviction, to charge us wrongfully, their religion was vain indeed. With men

of that complexion I would not walk in a dark evening. Dissent from me as widely as you please, but tell me not that I maintain tenets which, with my church, I have ever execrated.

Nature of
Controversy.

To controversial writing I am no friend: were it calculated to do good, the good had been done long ago. Much evil it has often produced; perhaps, indeed, because the combatants are seldom actuated by a true and Christian Spirit. But if angels will not come down amongst us, men must be our controvertists; and men will have the passions and feelings of men.—Controversy not only generates animosity; it may sometimes also disturb the peace and unhinge the faith of the purest believer: So much depends on the address and superior talents of the writer. Against this evil, when it happens, what good will you throw into the opposite scale? In the multitude, the sincere man, on both sides, is most liable to be disturbed: He, whose ways are evil, heeds little, and corrects neither faith nor morals for the

the writings of a Jewel or a Father Parsons : — yet religious truth is of great importance. Let it come to me then in its own native simplicity and innocence, unattended by clamour and hostile strife : from the mouth that instructs, and by instruction persuades me, I will receive it ; but who would not reject the fairest present, if, whilst one hand holds it out for acceptance, the other gives a violent blow on the cheek ?

Circumstances indeed there are when to come forward is laudable, and may be necessary ; the good of many may demand it. In such circumstances, I conceive, was one of the gentlemen, who have engaged in this dispute. But how you, Sir, were in that predicament, I know not ; though you seem to think, you were. The chaplain of Worcester had crossed the Atlantic, and with him his opinions : these indeed return ; but in what were you interested to support them, unless previously you had pledged yourself to it ? His *Address* to the Catholics of Worcester

you

you published; this, it should seem, was as much as friendship could request. But Pylades would have died for Orestes!—You and he had agreed to quit your old communion; that was your own concern; why were your neighbours to be allured into the same step? Soon would they have forgotten their chaplain; nor would they have thought the worse of you, if, to defend his doctrine, you had never *appealed* to scripture, reason, or tradition.

When you conformed to the established Church, it was clear, you meant to break from your former connections: yet now you complain that we are not kind to you. Once, you say, you were a *general favourite*, and “you fondly told yourself, that a “friend would love at all times.” Experience, Sir, is a cruel check to romantic notions: and what right has a deserter to take along with him the affections of those on whom he turns his back? If the step he takes be pleasing to his own conscience, there he must look for a friend. This ever happens

happens in all societies, religious and political; and I have elsewhere assigned the reason. Bonds of union would mean nothing, if separation might pretend to the same advantages and endearments. Benevolence and general philanthropy, though pretty words; are, in fact, but little adapted to the heart of man: He does not exist such as the philosopher, in his wild musings, represents him. But though I cannot give my approbation to a deserter, I will not judge his *motives*; they may be sincere as the heart of innocence. We do not see with the same eyes, nor do we reason from the same conception of ideas; in a word, you and I are not the same person.

Philosophy has somewhere told me that, in every process of reasoning, I am not to introduce unnecessary causes, or to introduce more than *one*, if this one will account for the effect in question.—You renounced the Communion of Rome, and you say it was, because its tenets were not reconcileable with scripture and reason. This
cold

Celibacy.

cold argument does not easily make its way through all the strong habits of education. Before conscience had clearly triumphed, was there no auxiliary that poured in his armed forces, and assisted the victory? Love, I am told, is a shrewd controvertist: what did he not do with a man much wiser than us all? That this was the case, you alone can tell; but if it was, your conversion can be accounted for without much recourse to other motives, which are unnecessary, and which, when in competition with this, are of trifling avail. The rigid discipline of Rome could have little chance with such antagonists, as Love and Music.

I cannot say whether it would be better that this discipline of our church were repealed; perhaps it might: But as long as it subsists, so long is it the duty of each individual, in her communion, to submit to it. Such are the laws of all establishments.—Could I be prevailed on to quit my religion, never, if I know myself, would I enter into matrimony. It shall

shall be said of me, that I profelited from conviction of error, and not that passion had brought me low.—Nor is there much encouragement given to profelites by the English church. For this I do not well account ; we receive converts with much warmer cordiality. May this indifference arise from a lurking suspicion, that it is not always that hidden thing, called conscience, which is the casting motive ? In any other view, surely he, who breaks through the ties of education, and often of family, for the sake of heavenly truth, merits some attention, and should be *rewarded* in the earthly acceptation of the word. Pure Love of truth, a mind superior to the world, and fearless integrity, are rapturous considerations, when viewed in the common medium of theory ; but when the wind blows keen on my shoulders, and I am come to the last crust of my loaf—and what if my wife and children, those sweet objects, about which you talk so prettily in your *Essay on Celibacy*, should be weeping round me—what think you then, Sir ? May

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not

not a little gross food and rayment be serviceable to keep the soul to its first elevation ?

That *Essay*, I think, you wrote, after you were married, to prove that the law of celibacy was not binding. The hour of publication was not well chosen. The work I disliked much : It was inaccurate, indelicate and confused. Want of order, and a proper discrimination of subjects, are essential faults also in the work before me. When this is the case, the mind is soon bewildered, and the memory brings off nothing but indistinct and uncertain combinations. “ On religious subjects,” you say, “ it is of much more consequence not to omit any material argument, than to study how to present them in the most regular arrangement and form.” Why on religious subjects, which are sometimes obscure, and often very complicated ? The best arrangement, in the writer’s power, should never be neglected, whatever the subject be. As well might the genius, that directs our dreams, be called

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in as an able master in the field of controversy; he might sometimes give us arguments, and method he would value as little as you possibly can. Give me, Sir, due arrangement, and a chain of reasoning, however concise, strongly pressed on the mind: this will carry more conviction with it, than volumes of confused materials.

With the coolness of an unconcerned spectator, I have viewed your controversy, and may therefore be, I presume, not quite unqualified to pronounce on the merits of the cause. I will tell you also what I think of your respective performances, and what is the state of my mind after having read them with some attention. As none of you can pretend to have said, what had not been said a thousand and a thousand times before; a man habituated to such discussions, could be little moved; but he could tell what appearance of force each argument seemed to bear, better than he, who either unaccustomed to such controversy, or weak in his belief, is more liable to be

startled by all he hears. The oak that never bowed to a storm, can yet judge of the blast that strikes it, better than the tender reed which bends before every zephyr. In a dispute, which sometimes you think is important, and sometimes that it is not, it may be the wish of some few at least, to know the sentiments of those who have attended to it. For them I write.

Mr Wharton.

Mr. Wharton's Tract is an elegant composition; it has the air of great candour and sincerity; and is warmly addressed to the feelings. When he speaks of himself, of the anxiety which attended his enquiries, and of the motives which finally settled his decision, it is the solemn language of a man who wishes to be believed—and I believe him.—But if there be truth in some reports I have heard; that he took the sacrament in our church on his road to America; that there he, for some time officiated in his usual character, and this after his conscience had told him he was in error; I cannot see that he is entitled to all the credit
his

his expressions seem to claim.—In the controversial parts, he is sometimes loose ; often relies too implicitly on the assertions of others, and quotes without sufficient care. This has been proved. They, who knew him well, say he was not a man of study, and that probably he had not made those laborious researches, of which he tells us. It is an easy task, with all the voluminous materials that are every where at hand, to compile a work of controversy : I can quote all the Fathers most plausibly, without having read a single page in any. This every reader does not know, and wonders at the learning of his author ; those days and nights he has worn away in study !

Mr. Wharton has written in the best manner ; he has been read with pleasure, and his work was admirably adapted to produce the effect he wished. Let me also observe that it contained but few pages, which, to me at least, is a powerful recommendation. If he thought it expedient to attempt a justification of himself to his old friends,

I think

I think, he might have done it in a less exceptionable manner. Why, under the cloak of friendly solicitude, act the part of an enemy? Though he, from motives strongly cogent to his own mind, might see sufficient reason to desert their communion; yet, at the same time, well did he know that the Catholics of Worcester were safe in the religion, which himself, for years, had inculcated to them. — Here he should have left them. But, in my eyes, how much more censurable is he for having carried the same spirit to his own country, and there also having attempted to spread the seeds of dissention and of religious acrimony. *The Enemy came, and sowed tares upon the wheat.*—What, think you, was my reflection, when I closed Mr. Wharton's tract? That it was prettily written, but that the author, with the same pen, could have written just as prettily on the other side.—This other side has been taken up in England and in America.

Mr. Pilling.

Mr. Pilling, who replied to Mr.
Wharton

Wharton in this country, is a gentleman, I am told, of learning. He had spent many years in a foreign University, and had there, from Martin Luther to Doctor Hurd, gained many an easy victory over all the monsters of the Reformation. In the schools the enemy is brought to the stake, bound and gagged.—With eagerness he entered the lists against your champion; but though, in point of science, he has proved himself very equal to the contest, he was not, it seems, sensible that a certain address and fashioned manner are now necessary to draw the attention of the public. People read not so much for instruction as for amusement; if then you mean to instruct, take care that amusement, in some form or other, go along with you. Particularly when the subject has but its own importance to recommend it, there must be a charm of language, or novelty of imagination, to lead the mind on from page to page.

Sai, che là corre il mondo, ove più versi
Di sue dolcezze il lusinghier Parnasso.

TASSO.

The taste may be vicious, but man must be taken as he is. To this art of composition, from an absence of many years abroad, Mr. Pilling was necessarily a stranger. He was but lately returned to England.—I have read and written much, still I know my foreign features are often visible. —How long shall *Englishmen* be compelled to run to France for education, or else sit down satisfied to be called learned, if they can read their prayer books, and write their own names !

Mr. Pilling's *Caveat*—the title is not very modern—has great merit ; it is a very sound reply to all the objections of his adversary : but, I fear, it has been little read. It is too scholastic, sometimes too harsh, often too wordy, and always, from the deficiency mentioned, drags upon the attention. In victory I wish he had exulted less ; when the enemy is down, he sometimes treads upon him.—You, Sir, do not think it a strong reply to your friend, and have therefore written 379 long pages to refute it. Yet hardly
would

would you have done this, had the *Caveat* appeared to you so very weak. A suspicion is raised, that you apprehended, at least, some danger to Mr. Wharton's solemn protestations, to his emphasis of language, to his controversial address, from this unfeeling adversary. As a friend you stepped in, and aimed to turn aside the blow.

A few months after this we were favoured with an *Address to the Roman Catholics of the United States of America*. There Mr. Wharton had published his *Apology*; and this it was that called forward a Catholic Clergyman of Maryland; he thought it his duty to reply to a publication, which no good intention could, at that moment, have circulated. Had he gone to China, this same pamphlet, it seems, must have been reprinted at Peking.—Mr. Carroll, a learned, a judicious, a candid, and a respectable Churchman, is the author of this *Address*. His peculiar situation—for he either is, or soon will be, Bishop over the American Catholics—rendered the public declaration of his sentiments, on this occasion, necessary.

Mr. Carroll.

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Even you acknowledge that, in general, he has written well. What, Sir, could have impelled you, a few months ago, to present us with *remarks* on this *address*? One property, and only one, in my opinion, they had to recommend them, and that does not belong to the *appeal* before me. You might have reflected that cursory *remarks* thrown together in a few hours are generally too trifling for the public eye; however they serve as a shade to bring forward more strikingly the beauties of Mr. Carroll's *address*.

The language of this small Treatise is generous and gentlemanlike. Mr. Carrol seems to feel his superiority over the Worcester Chaplain, but he uses his strength with temper and moderation. He complains that he had not books to recur to; the circumstance was rather favourable, for on that account he has given us more from himself. His own mind was a sufficient repository for the materials he wanted. Believe me, Sir, Mr. Carroll has amply solved the difficulties which your friend
had

had twisted together; and after having read him, I wish you had been silent. To contend for the last word is the play of children. The style of the *address* is so temperate, and in terms so full of benevolence does the author part from his adversary, that you, the man of feeling, should have been silenced even by sentiment.

At the time, of which I am speaking, I have reason to know, that Mr. Carroll was meditating great schemes for settling on a proper basis the Catholic church of North America. From having resided many years in Europe, and because he had read the annals of Church History, it was well known to him, how many abuses had crept into the vulgar practice, and how much the discipline of his church had departed from primitive simplicity. A fair occasion was now offered to remove this extraneous matter from his new establishment, and this occasion the enlightened mind of Mr. Carroll was ready to seize with ardour.—He would hold communion with the Churches of

Europe in the profession of the same faith, yet he would take to himself and his ministers that independence on the Roman See, which is their Christian right. The Bishop of Rome should be his Primate, in the sense he had anciently been received by the orthodox churches of Asia and Africa.—Warned by experience, he would keep clear from all those disputes, which for ages had brought discord into the fold of Christ.—In conformity also to the good sense of antiquity, the public service of the church he would give in the language of his people, conscious that they ought to understand what is meant for their instruction.—He would retrench, I presume, that cumbrous weight of ceremonies and unmeaning pageantry which, the warmer imaginations of some nations, and the material conceptions of others, had introduced into European practice.—In a word, all that he would reform, which rational piety and a proper sense of the dignity of religion should point out to him as deserving of it.

With

With these brilliant ideas was the mind of Mr. Carroll engaged, when his friend and relation, the Chaplain of Worcester, arrived from England. He had flattered himself, he tells us, that he would join him in his labours, and that, hand in hand, they should proceed to accomplish the work he had projected. Judge what his amazement was! Mr. Wharton appears with the *common prayer book* in one hand, and in the other, I suppose, was his Letter to the Catholics of Worcester.—Yet the American bishop is not of a temper, I believe, easily to desist from his designs; and I hope soon to hear that he has realised, at least in part, the plan I have imperfectly sketched out to you. Opposition should give a spring to his exertions.

I have given you, Sir, what appears to me a just delineation of the works, this controversy has produced. You will say I am a partial man; and so I am—because I am a man. But my partiality has not got the better of my judgment. Could I think the force of argument

The religion
of Catholics
rational.

argument lay on your side, it would be my duty, I suppose, to take a wife, and then write against the errors of Popery. You have known me for many years, and that very intimately. My mind is habitually turned to reflection, and I declare there is not a single article of my creed, which I have not examined with that free discussion, that Philosophy has taught me to adopt. Having done this, you must allow me at least to be a *rational* Catholic. But I am not the only one. It is folly to imagine that we have not, amongst us, men of as strong sense as are any where to be found ; and can it be supposed that the religion of such men is that mass of absurdities, which you and others vainly represent ? Our common people are as well instructed, and are as good members of society, as any the Protestant church can boast of : of what avail then to heap objections on objections, to ransack Scripture, reason, and tradition, in quest of trash, and to collect from idle authors more idle anecdotes, unless to prove—that
you

you have spent your time to little purpose?

The Catholic church, whatever you may pretend, is the mother of all churches ; you have all gone out from her. Through the course of 17 centuries, if, in the various revolutions of states and kingdoms, the conflict of tumultuous passions, and the changes of manners, language, and opinions, she has contracted habits that might now be reformed ; what else could be expected ? The substance of belief has never varied, and it would become you to respect it.—These attacks are unprovoked ; we molest you not in your religion, naked, and poor, and varying as it is with every sun that rises. Quit us when you please, and conform to what mode of faith you please, or conform to none ; but let others judge for themselves ; let them live, and let them think, as their fathers and England did before them.—I must turn to your *appeal*.

Already I have said, what is my general opinion of it : Something more
I would

I would say, could I possibly draw such scattered objects into any distinct point of view. But positively I refuse to follow you through the detail of your enquiries; it would carry me much too far, nor indeed do I see to what it might carry me. You perhaps, like Dædalus, may know how to escape from your own labyrinth; but I alas! have no Ariadne to provide means for my return, if once I enter.—Be not scandalized at such profane allusions; they relieve the mind, and make the way more cheerful.

Union of
Churches.

For a moment, it may be worth your while and mine to enquire, by what possible means this controversy could be ended; evidently not by those which have hitherto been pursued, because, after a trial of centuries, they have not succeeded. Appeals to Scripture and antiquity are urged on both sides.—I speak of churches; for individuals, even as the matter stands, can ease their conscience when God and they are willing.—Bodies or establishments of men are not so easily managed :
Yet

yet, I think, were the members of two churches honestly disposed to unite, things might be done by an obvious method. Let their creeds be mutually produced, fairly explained, and on both sides such concessions made, as would soon occur to men, who should be inclined to concord. Heaven knows, as I have elsewhere observed, how thin that wall of separation is which divides us from the church of England! yet neither of us, I fear, are acquainted with that temper of mind, upon which, as the most essential requisite, the whole business hinges.

Labour, Sir, to generate this Christian spirit, and your labour will merit praise. The language of your *appeal* will not do it. You there tell us, our religion is not from Christ, that it is a deviation from all antiquity, that it is foolish in its practice, ridiculous in its discipline; and in the next breath you talk of concord, of mutual forbearance, of respect for prejudices—and of what do you not talk? This can never do: If we may ever be friends, let there be an end to controversy.

Church Estab-
lishments.

In proportion as I am a friend to the most unbounded *Toleration*, so am I an enemy to *Church-Establishments*. They are the bane of general concord and of fraternal amity ; and their soil, I fear, is not favourable to the growth of Truth. But in the Reformed churches, an *Establishment*, to my apprehension is a monster, on whatever side you view it. Freed, as it was thought, from the restraining arm of an unerring guide, each man, at the Reformation, received powers to build his own faith on his own Bible : yet soon, even here, are creeds formed and tests held out, to which he that will not subscribe may starve.—The *instability of its belief* is another strong objection to the Protestant communion ; yet this again is an immediate consequence from its first principles. If I may form my faith as I will, surely I may change it as I please. To obviate this inconvenience, for such it was judged, the profession of *certain articles* was deemed expedient. But with this, where is the *liberty of faith* ? Nor has the scheme answered its intended

tended purpose ; for it is well known that, in your church, hardly two men think alike. And why should they, say you, provided they believe all that is necessary to salvation ? Withdraw then your creeds and articles of communion, as a useless imposition that may disturb tender consciences, and are but a solemn mockery. On this ground, Sir, I am ready to meet you when you will, if controversy must be your pursuit.

But though I would not shackle the mind of any man, I cannot be persuaded to think that, either so little is enough, or that we are free to model this little into what form we chuse. The idea does not come up to the notion, I have been taught to entertain of the great Christian Scheme, destined to improve upon all that weak human reason had dictated to Socrates or his disciples ; which should elevate the understanding to the contemplation of sublime truths ; which should expand the heart by a warmer impression of the social duties ; and which, by a slow

Indifference
in religion.

but sure process, should finally draw all the human race into one grand Society of Christian believers. Present circumstances may not seem favourable to the idea, but what is the moment of to-day or yesterday, when measured with ages yet to come?—Can you believe, Sir, that our Saviour appeared on earth, sent by God to speak *Truth* to man, and that *this Truth* may be A or B, F or G, or even a mere o, at the option of human wit?—I must believe, you say, what he has revealed: but how shall I know it? If I ask the Arian; if the Anabaptist; if the Moravian; if the Quaker; if the Presbyterian; if the Unitarian; if the Church-of-England-man: they will each return me a different answer. I go not out of my own country. Yet all these profess to believe in revelation, and have searched the Scriptures. If out of condescension to their respective opinions, I reject as unscriptural what they reject; how much will be left for me to receive in the line of revealed Truths? Little more than this, that there is a God: but this needed no revelation; for
reason

reason alone had taught it to Plato, and to the ancient world.

If dissatisfied with the result of this enquiry, I follow your advice, and search the Scriptures; are you clear I shall not find in them, or think I find, that Jesus was but a *man like myself*, and that he came not into the world to *atone* for its crimes? This a wiser man than you or I, more than thinks he has found there, and guided by the same lights, he traces it through the most important annals of ecclesiastical records. You will hardly say that this point also is of little moment, when the fixing of it would utterly ruin the whole system of present Christian faith.

Will you allow that religion is a matter of some concern; and that unity in belief would be preferable to variation?—He is no Christian who denies the first; but if you grant the Second, you overthrow the Reformation.—We must have a guide.

In many parts of your *appeal* you speak of a supposed *intolerance* and

Liberality of
Catholics,

un-

uncharitableness of Catholics.—I wish we were more tolerant, and more charitable: But let him that is without sin, first cast the stone. All churches are intolerant, and as such uncharitable. If yours, on some occasions, may appear less so, it arises from a greater political freedom in the nature of those governments, where the reformation is established. Take the sentiments of private men, and you will find we are all greatly alike. Religion draws its tincture from the soil it falls on. The easy and benevolent disposition is tolerant; but the severe and caustic man would persecute in England and in Spain, in Holland and in Portugal. In this country—and to this country I wish the whole discussion might be confined—I believe, our moderation and candour are equal to yours. Yet circumstances considered, ought it to be so? We are an oppressed, an injured people. The Church established is in possession of the wealth, the honours, the interest, which were once ours; and we are as charitable, as tolerant, as liberal, as benevolent,

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as generous as they! The profession of such sentiments, and the patriotism of English Catholics, are a phenomenon, I maintain it, in the history of man.—You, Sir, benevolent as you are, do not allow that, “Roman Catholics, *as such*, are walking in the paths of safety:” (p. 14) And therefore, like the Patriarch Lot, you hastened from amongst us, before the exterminating Angel should come down.

Our education, after all, is somewhat calculated to narrow the mind; and the opinion we all adopt, that *unity* in belief is essential to the Christian Scheme, naturally generates rather an unfavourable idea of those, who dissent from us. But we leave them in the hands of an allwise, an alljust, an allmerciful Providence; and wherelse, Sir, would you wish to be?

You that were educated amongst us should have been better taught. What liberty of discussion, or, if you will, of doubting, does any Christian possess
that

that we have not? When we are *convinced* that God has spoken, it would be infidelity not to submit. What matters it, from whence this conviction may arise? You are convinced from Scripture alone, we from Scripture as interpreted to us; but there is a time when we are both convinced. After this indeed if you still chuse to search, I own it is a liberty, to which we do not pretend. Is it this you call *free enquiry*?

Real Presence

So much has been said on the *manner* of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, that it is not possible we can ever agree, hardly indeed is it now possible we can understand one another. As a divine, and as a philosopher, how often have I not revolved that weighty question: and what was the result? That Christians who, on a subject which should naturally raise the warmest sentiments of gratitude and piety towards a beneficent Saviour, in every acceptation of the doctrine, could proceed to such strife and unwarrantable dif-

diffentions, merited not that a memorial so full of charity should be left amongst them.—The God that made me has given me a something, which perhaps he has not given to the ox or the elephant, and this man calls *reason*; when I use it to contemplate the wonders of his works, or to weigh my own littleness, it is well done; but when I extol myself, and dare to draw lines round the Almighty, my rashness is complete, and I merit not that glimmering ray which in mercy he bestowed upon me.—On this subject you have indeed collected a great deal, and all that deal has been collected before, and we have answered it. Let us have something new.

The language on both sides is similar. The difference only is that we mean what we say, and you do not. In other disputes, generally the altercation is about words, here it is about the thing signified. Of the two this may be the most rational.—Were it known what is the present nature of the exalted body of our Saviour, and

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consequently what its powers are, analogy would supply some data on which to reason. Preposterously you bring it down to a level with your own flesh and blood, and triumph in the vain evidence of your arguments. As well, Sir, aim to confine within walls of brass the energy of the forked lightning, because they are impermeable to you and me.

Rule of faith.

You mention (p. 60) the famous rule of Veron, and tell us, “if this were Englished and explained in our chapels, the people would be apt to consider him as a heretic, who totally misrepresented their belief.”—This is not the language of a candid man. The *Rule of Veron* I always explain, and so, I believe, do most of my brethren. It is the great hinge on which our whole religion turns.—And we have two systems of religion, you also say, “one ordered to be practised, the other allowed to be believed; one for the unlettered, another for the learned.”—What an unconscionable man must you have been, not to be satisfied with so accom-

accommodating a system! Unfortunately perhaps this indulgence did not lie on the practical side, and to be allowed mere liberty of thought you valued little. I am a more moderate man, and therefore, in the name of literature and of philosophy, I thank you for the discovery. I declare, as a man of some letters, I had not before the most distant suspicion, that I could claim any privilege, which did not equally reach to the peasant that followed his plough.

This is the rule of Veron; That *for any doctrine to become an article of Catholic faith, two things are conjointly necessary; first, that it be revealed by God; secondly, that it be proposed by the Church.*

—If either of these two conditions be wanting, the doctrine is no point of Catholic belief. — It must be *revealed*; in this we all agree: but it must also be *proposed*; here you dissent from us.

—Were it *clear* that God has spoken, and were the *sense* of what he has spoken clear, then would this second condition be unnecessary. I want no au-

thority to tell me that two and two make four. But neither can we discover what is the word of God, nor the meaning of this word, if left to the single guidance of our own understandings. The reformed churches are not without understanding ; they have laboured, and they have searched ; and yet which of them can tell me what certainly is this *revealed* word, or what is its *certain* interpretation? Where there is *variation* in opinion, there can be no *certitude* : and will you say, that faith in God should not be sure and unshaken? There must be an *unerring guide*. —I may deceive myself ; but if I am not deceived, these few lines, to a docile mind, have decided the important question.

In a longer discussion, I would not take the serious enquirer to his Bible, for that, with its meaning, is the point in debate ; nor would I take him to a laborious research into antiquity, where he and I might be both bewildered ; but I would take him to his *Creed*, that creed, in which you, and I, and all of us,

us, profess to believe, *because* it comes down, through a turbulent lapse of more than 17 centuries, pure and unchanged, from the hands of the apostles.

This Creed says: *I believe in God the father—and in Jesus Christ—and in the Holy Ghost, the holy Catholic church, &c.* Apostles Creed.
 As you believe in God, as you believe in Jesus Christ, as you believe in the Holy Ghost, so do you profess to believe in the *holy Catholic church*. To believe in God is to believe that *he is*, and to believe *what he teaches*; so you believe in his Son; so in his holy Spirit. What other belief could the apostles mean? To believe then in the *holy Catholic church* is to believe that there *is* such a church, and to believe *what this church teaches*.—By whom are we authorised to suppose that this article is not to be understood as the others are? The language is the same. The belief of the Church is joined to the belief of the three divine persons.

By the word *Church*, Christians understand a *Society* making profession to believe

believe the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and to govern itself by his word. Of such a Society as this the apostles speak. This Society or church cannot *cease to be*; if it did, the Creed of the apostles would cease to be true. As long then as I can profess my belief in the three divine persons, so long shall I believe in the holy Catholic Church.—This church must be ever *visible*; it is a Society of men; and as well might it not be, as not be visible. An *invisible* church would be no object of belief, though God and the Divine persons are.—This Church of the apostles can never *err*. Can the divine persons err? I am to believe in the church, as I do in them. Were the Church to err, the apostles who made the belief in the church an article of Christian faith, would have imposed upon us.

It may be observed, that there never was a time, when there was not on earth a *visible* and *speaking* authority, to which men were obliged to submit. Before Jesus Christ was the Synagogue; when the Synagogue was to fail, Christ himself

self appeared; when he retired, he left a church, to which he sent his holy spirit. Bring again Jesus Christ teaching, preaching, working miracles, I have no longer need of the church; but also take from me the church, I must have Christ again in person, that is, I must have a speaking authority, some exterior means of resolving doubts, and this means must be *infallible*.

The creed says nothing of the *written word*, belief in the Scriptures is not mentioned.—The rule of Providence, in the establishment of his church, so ordained it. He has given us a church, *ever visible* and *ever unerring*, in which we profess to believe. With this belief we are disposed to receive what the Church offers to us. She gives us the Scriptures, and says, they are a writing inspired by God. As such we take them from her hand.—Our belief in the Church then *precedes* our belief in the Scriptures? Most evidently it does; for this belief in the Church is the very external means which God has appointed to bring us to the knowledge of his written

written word. I should not believe the Gospel, said St. Austin, unless the authority of the church moved me to it.—The apostles, in framing their creed, obviously point out this order to us.

In the church then was *deposited* the word of God: she received it from the apostles, for to them were first committed the Truths, it had pleased God to reveal. But could not he who *revealed* to the apostles, *interpret*, if necessary, to their successors?—With the Scriptures the church gives us *the sense* of the Scriptures: what are the Scriptures without their *true* interpretation? She gives us *that sense*, which the apostles explained to the church, and which she has retained.—The same exterior means therefore which God uses to give us his written word, that he uses to give us its sense; and that means is the authority of his Church. When this authority *has spoken*, we neither *doubt* nor *examine*; for we *believe* in the holy Catholic church. Is not this highly rational?

We

We know, that the *Inspirer* of the apostles is the *teacher* of their successors.—Thus have we a Church; thus the word of God; and thus the meaning of the word.

It was by this very simple process of reasoning, that Mr. Claude, the learned and virtuous minister of Charenton, in the year 1678, was so much disconcerted in his conference with the illustrious Bishop of Meaux; the consequence of which was the return of Mademoiselle de Duras to the religion which her fathers had forsaken.

This Creed, you and all other Christian Societies possess, as well as we, and you profess to believe in it: but your belief is merely verbal. You have no faith in *any* Catholic church; for how can you have *faith* in a Society, which you maintain may err? Nor from her do you receive the scriptures: she is no guide to you, and consequently the words, *I believe in the holy Catholic church*, carry no idea to your minds. Either they must be joined to our faith

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in the three divine persons, or, as unmeaning, they should be expunged from the Creed.

Our belief in the Church is not only antecedent to, as I have said, but it is independent on the written word; one is a consequence of the other. A *baptised* child, or grown up person, who has never heard of the scriptures, believes in the church, as he believes in the Trinity, in the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. It is the faith that he received in baptism. Afterwards when he consults the written word, he will there find a *confirmation* of his first belief. But this first belief was divine, being founded on the *revelation* of God; for surely the apostles were as much inspired in the compilation of their creed, as afterwards they were in writing the gospels and the other canonical books.

Some ancient writers tell us that this creed, by the express desire of the apostles, was not committed to writing. They

They entertained not, it seems, so exalted an idea of a written word. At all events, is it necessary that the word of God should be written? Is it from ink and paper that it derives its authority? What then was the doctrine, which Christ preached, and did not write; or that of the apostles, before any canonical book was composed; or that in particular of those seven apostles, of whom it is not recorded that they wrote a single line?—To Catholics then the *Scriptures* are not the *only* or *essential* rule of faith; their rule is the *word of God*, in whatever form it may have come down to them.—Nor indeed do I discover, that it ever appeared to be the intention of divine Providence, that the written word should be this sole rule; it was to *confirm* the true doctrine, but not to *deliver* it.—Were the bible to be lost, would the word of God be lost also? and would a *new revelation* become necessary?—As the subject is important, I must beg leave to pursue it a little further.

When the wise Legislators of Anti-
quity undertook to improve or to
F 2 form

Christ the
great Law-
giver.

form states, they inscribed their laws on brass or marble. By what other means could they hope to perpetuate their impresson on the minds of their people? So also did Moses by the express command of the Almighty, for he was but a deputed lawgiver, and the Jews were a carnal nation. But when the Christian Legislator appeared, who held in his hand the spirits of men, which he could move at will, he looked not to perishable materials; the great succession of ages was present to him, and he wrote his law on their hearts.

No parts of this law, though the sublimest in theory, and the most perfect in practice, and consequently the most removed from human discovery, were by our Saviour himself committed to writing; nor do we find, that he ordered his disciples to do it: as long then as he remained on earth, there was no written word; nor was it wanted.—I have also said, that the Apostles, for some years, practised no other mode of teaching than that they had
had

had learned from their master ; as they had received the word of God, so they gave it. Minds warm with the impression of truth recur not to the cool process of writing,

But when disputes began to arise among the converts, or their doctrine was misinterpreted, then, and when they could not go in person, did they *write* to such churches, to *confirm* or to *explain* what they had before, by word of mouth, delivered to them. This *written word* then *succeeded* to their preaching ; it arose as particular occasions called for it : but they *wrote* to none, whom they had not before *instructed*.—Their *public* rule of faith was the Creed, they had themselves composed, and such other doctrine, as in their wisdom, as circumstances directed, they delivered to their followers.

All was not to be given at once—therefore does not the creed contain all—the minds of their hearers were to be *gradually* informed. Such is the process

All instruction progressive.

process in all instruction. The great system of religion was to be developed, as mankind became properly tutored to receive it. This power of disclosing, and of proportioning, his doctrine, was committed to the discretion of his apostles, ever under the immediate direction of heaven, by a master who well understood the nature of the human mind. Who gives into the hand of an infant the *Principia* of Newton, or shews him the *Essay on human understanding*? What the infant is to these profound compositions, that was the world, when the apostles first opened their commission, and began to preach the sublime doctrines of heaven to men, who were ignorant of the first rudiments of spiritual science.

The apostles themselves had been differently instructed; it was necessary they should; their tuition was rapid and extraordinary: but it enters not into the general ways of Providence to proceed by such methods.—In this view of things, Sir, there is nothing new, but some readers may wish to see it further illustrated: I will do it.

Our

Our Saviour Christ died in the year 34.—Until 41, a term of seven years, we read of no *New Testament*; in that year St. Matthew wrote his gospel for the Jewish converts, and in their own language. Naturally they would wish to possess in writing an authentic history of the life of him, concerning whom so much was said, and in whose doctrine they had just been instructed to believe.

In the year 45, St. Mark, the disciple of St. Peter, published his gospel, an abridgment rather of the former, as it is thought in Greek, and if at Rome, for the use of some converts in that city. They had not heard probably of the work of St. Matthew, or, if they had, it was written in a language they did not understand.

Thirteen years after, in 58, St. Luke, the disciple of St. Paul, wrote his gospel, in Greek also, and in Greece; and, as he tells us himself, with a view to oppose certain histories, which then circulated, and of which he did not approve.

approve. He addressees it to a person of the name of Theophilus.—As these two last writers were no apostles, they could only relate what they had received from others, probably from their respective masters.

As late as the year 99, appears the gospel of St. John, the beloved disciple of Christ, written at Ephesus, in the Greek language, at the request of the Asiatic bishops, principally against those heretics, who denied the divinity of our Saviour, and, as it is said, to supply some omissions in the preceding gospels.

In the *acts of the apostles*, which the same St. Luke wrote soon after his gospel, and as a continuation of it, in the same language, addressed to the same Theophilus, is given a very concise account of the first establishment of Christianity, after the ascension of our Lord, and of St. Peter's teaching, with a more particular history of the labours of St. Paul, his master, to the year 63.

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The four gospels, I have mentioned, are historical compositions; they relate, in a very succinct manner, some only of the principal events of our Saviour's life, his birth, his preaching, his miracles, and his death. Their first design undoubtedly was the edification of those for whom they were compiled; as likewise that the converts to Christianity might know, that the doctrine they had received was conformable to that which Christ himself had delivered to their teachers. But it could not be from this written word, which *occasionally* only came into existence, that the first Christians received their instructions. Give but a moment's attention to the times, to the occasions, to the language, to the places where these histories were published, it must strike you with first evidence, that *then* at least they could not be intended for a *general* rule of faith. Can that be *general* which is not at all times, in all languages, and in all places? I mean as far as the Christian religion then extended.—In process of time this written word was more diffused, and

as it spread, I allow, it acquired an importance, which at first it had not. But if at first it was *no rule of faith*, as you must allow, what right had you or I to give it a new destination? This is innovation: we adhere to the maxims of the apostolic ages.

Canonical
Epistles.

In regard to the *canonical Epistles*, addressed either to particular churches, or to particular men; were I urged to go into the detail, I would shew, at what times, and on what occasions, they were sent; that it was always to those who had been previously instructed, and with a view, either to strengthen them in their faith, or to explain more fully, or to warn them against, and to oppose, such false teachers, as, in the absence of the apostles, disturbed their belief. All this, you well know, is evidently marked on the face of each epistle. Had the apostles entertained modern ideas of a written word, surely they would have sent it before them, at least, to prepare the way. They might have prefaced it by saying, “we send you a writing containing the doctrine

trine you are to believe; but examine it yourselves, and see if it has marks of inspiration on it; when you have discovered this, read and search it, weigh its expressions, and compare passage with passage; your own judgments will draw out the truth; we will use no authority, no influence that may bias your understandings.”—Had this been the conduct of the men deputed to establish the gospel, it would have decided unanswerably the authority of a written word; but it was quite the reverse: they first instruct by preaching, and then they confirm their doctrine, when necessary, by writing.

Nor were these apostolic writings, at first, intended for the whole body of the faithful; they were sent, as I have said, to particular churches, as to Rome, or Thessalonica: Probably many were written which have never come down to us.—In process of time, keeping pace with the gospels, they also were extended: the names of their authors were of the highest respect; and *because* the doctrine and maxims

they contained, were found conformable to what the apostles, attesting their mission by miracles, had taught, they were judged proper to be laid before other churches than those to which they had been addressed. Thus grew their authority, till finally they were universally adopted into the general canon of belief.—This is not mere theory, Sir; authentic facts declare it to have been the real case.

Besides, in every one of these writings, how many things are there, so peculiarly local, and of a nature so temporary and personal, that they can bear no application to other times, persons, or places? The circumstance has favoured the ingenuity of commentators, but it has little served to promote the real interest of truth.—I may then conclude that, in whatever estimation any of these writings were at first held, either at Corinth or at Ephesus, they did not carry with them the weight of *inspired* authority to other churches, till they were accepted *as such*, or till the universal church declared them to be

be *authentic*. We know, what was the fate of the Epistle to the Hebrews, for more than two hundred years, till it was adopted by the church into her canon.

The ancient Fathers, I am well aware, often speak of the scriptures, as of an infallible rule; and in their disputes with heretics have recourse to them. But what else could they do? Their adversaries would admit no other authority; and well did they appeal from the traditional doctrine to the written word, for they knew that this was a silent letter, which could return no answer, and about which they might wrangle to the end of time.—The scriptures indeed, if duly interpreted, that is, conformably to the doctrine which has been received from the apostles, are authority enough, and in this sense only were they applied by the fathers.

The Scrip-
tures.

These scriptures are to us a most sacred *depositum*; we respect them as the *inspired word* of God: but we give them

them not a *priority* of authority, which the apostles themselves gave not to them, and of which the primitive church seems to have been ignorant. What doctrine this church first received, that it had from the mouths of their inspired teachers ; that same was faithfully delivered to the succeeding generation ; and that same we now possess. Without the aid of a written word we should have had it ; it depended not on ink and paper ; but by that same word, I own it has been powerfully *supported* and *confirmed*. This was its proper destination.—Being thus in possession of this twofold word of God, the unwritten and the written, and this through the medium of a society or church, to whose hands they were both committed, we are taught to look up to this authority, as to an unerring and living guide, that we may not still be blown about by every wind. For the same God that inspired the apostles, continues to direct their successors.

From this view of things follows a consequence, which must not be omitted ; which is, that as the Christian revelation

velation is anterior to, and independent on the scriptures ; should there be any points in it, which may seem not to have any correspondent support in them ; it can only be said, that as the object of the inspired writers was not to deliver the *entire* system of religion, which they had done by preaching, but only to treat such matters as circumstances incidentally required, these particular subjects came not before them. Had it been otherwise, there can be no reason to imagine, that they would not equally have claimed their attention.

If I have dwelt longer on this subject, than I intended, it was its importance that has drawn me forward ; but even now much remains to be said. It is not exactly in this light, I know, that writers in general treat the question ; but viewed on a large scale, I see not, that it can be otherwise understood. The misfortune is, that most minds only consider detached parts of a system, as they rise isolated before them, and when this is the case, difficulties are multiplied, and what would not touch the

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the whole, bears hard upon single members. As it happens in religion, so does it in contemplating the moral and physical systems of the world.—The subject I have been treating would naturally lead me to consider the nature and general import of *inspiration*, as applied to the sacred writings, had I time to enter on the discussion, or rather, were this its place. Enough has been said to shew you, what way my mind must obviously lean, on so delicate a question.

No new faith
in the Church.

You seem to think it a very easy undertaking even to demonstrate that we have varied in our belief, and that new doctrine has been perpetually imported into the church.—When I see this subject entered among the *Contents* in a controversial writer, on your side, it is always the first thing I turn to. Many things, I confess, in the Catholic belief weigh rather heavy on my mind, and I should be glad to have a freer field to range in. Can you wish for a reader with better dispositions than these? I read then with a rapid, but close attention,
every

every moment expecting that some happy discovery will set me at liberty. Alas ! Sir, it has never yet happened : I meet with assertions, thrown out sometimes with an air of plausibility, texts of scripture alledged, but proving nothing, Fathers dragged forward to contradict their own words, and reason decoyed from its proper pursuits to discuss matters which belong not to it. With indignation I throw the book aside, for instead of gaining liberty, I discover that I have been reading only to convince myself still more, that I am obliged to believe what my Church proposes to me. The moment it shall be clearly pointed out, that doctrines have been received into the faith of the church, which were not revealed to the apostles, and by them delivered to their successors, to be expounded as circumstances should require, from that moment it will be my duty to quit her communion. That only is true which has been from the beginning. Language may have varied ; occurrences may have brought out to more public observation what before, by being kept

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back, was less noticed : but all this means nothing ; it was a process obviously adapted to the common order of things. It is nothing also to shew, that we have varied in discipline or in practices of little moment ; for this again is of a transient and flitting nature. What is changeable may change ; it has done, and will again : but the word of the Lord endureth for ever.

Luther.

In discussing that *Note* of the church, which is called its *holiness*, you introduce what, I think, may be termed a digression, on the life and virtues of that extraordinary man, the patriarch of the reformation, Martin Luther : but you allow that with his good qualities he also had his defects. His famous conference with the Devil seems rather to embarrass you, which therefore you determine to have been of the nature of St. Anthony's temptations, " a mere parable and fiction." Having quitted our church, I know not what right you had thus freely to dispose of those singular combats of our saint.

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The abilities of Luther, I think, were astonishing; and had he been less violently opposed, his passions probably would not have broken out into that torrent of intemperance, which with every moderate man must for ever disgrace his memory. I know when the air is peculiarly foul, that storms and tempests are often necessary to bring it to a proper degree of salubrity; but is it fair to reason of the moral as we do of the physical world? When the christian religion was first promulgated, truth was hardly known to man, and vice had risen to its highest pitch of enormity; yet what were the instruments divine Providence elected to produce that great and important reformation? The mind even involuntarily is drawn into a comparison of characters, when circumstances are adduced to bring them together; and in this view I have sometimes compared the lives and manners of the reformers of the 16th century with those of an earlier date. And why, says the inquisitive mind, if the ways and thoughts of man were, at this last

period corrupted to so great a degree, should Providence appoint ministers to execute his designs of a complexion so widely different from those he had before chosen? Had not success attended those first measures, and therefore new ones were to be tried?—Yet, I allow, much good was *eventually* derived to the world from the reformation; though the means, by which it was accomplished, appear to me not justifiable hardly in a single instance.

The Council
of Trent.

The representation, you draw of the council of Trent, is overcharged, and, in some points, very unfairly taken. That in it there were cabals and dissensions, who will dispute? But when men are assembled, and their different views, their interests and passions are brought into conflict, who then will look for the serenity of a calm sea?—To counterbalance the evils, you have enumerated, surely something may be found of no inconsiderable moment. Read Sir, and you may yet learn; there was learning, religion, piety, and wise experience. To prove this, give your
eye

eye leave to run down the list of those, who assisted at, or composed the Council. Among them you will find names recorded, which the page of history will be careful to eternise.

After all, what very arduous business was to engage the council's attention? Merely to declare in 1545, as far as doctrine was concerned, what the tenets of belief were, which they had received from their predecessors. This had been the main business of all other councils; and to do this, it should not seem, that any extraordinary abilities or learning were requisite: a little recollection and honest zeal.—You singly, Sir, in a very short space of time, pretend to have found out, from scripture, reason and tradition, where is, and where is not, the true word of God; and in the compass of more than four years, 300 bishops, with a proportionable number of divines and learned men, shall not be able to do as much! --They engaged also in the business of a *reform*, and framed several very excellent regulations; but obstacles too powerful

erful to be surmounted were thrown in the way of a complete reformation.

It is always with peculiar satisfaction, that I read the decrees and canons of this celebrated synod; there is a science, a precision, a clearness, a classical elegance in every period and expression, that charms me.—With what different eyes indeed do we peruse this volume.

Fra. Paolo.

Paolo Sarpi, the Venetian patriot and statesman, whom I admire where he is admirable, equally perhaps with you, is, I know, the favourite historian of Protestants. Had he never published his history of this council, I should have thought him a greater man.—Warmed by the quarrel, which then subsisted between Venice and Rome, he sided, too partially for an historian, with his country. The most weighty matters he sometimes relates without any reference to authority; and in his general descriptions of men and things, often is his pen too malignant for the candour of an honest man. At the
close

close of each session, how injurious are the reflections he draws, often from vulgar talk and common fame, to disparage the preceding decrees. Yet even in this history, if read with no uncommon partiality, may be discovered truth enough for the maintenance of the cause, I support.

Pallavicini is the historian we generally prefer, and though his name be not illustrious as that of Fra. Paolo, yet I think him, on this particular subject, deserving of more credit. He had access to better records (the *Vatican Archives*,) nor does he withhold from us any knowledge of the other sources, from which he takes his information. Though brought out, without any disguise, to combat the assertions of the Venetian author, he seems as little partial to his cause, as possibly may be. Many things does he relate, which by no means redound to the honour of the Roman Pontiffs, and which very fully expose the contentions and scandalous behaviour of some, who assisted at the council. It was a just observation

Pallavicini.

observation of this author; “ That history is like a picture, then best, and most valuable, when it represents not what is fairest, but what comes nearest to the original.” Also has it been said that the friendly Pallavicini has done more real disservice to the court of Rome, than the pointed invective of the hostile Sarpi.

But your historiographer, Sir, is neither of these: It is Don Vargas, a Spaniard, who wrote *Letters* to the Bishop of Arras. In these he complains most bitterly of the haughty conduct of the Legate Crescentio; and therefore you infer, that the council was a confused and irregular assembly, and that the Spirit of God had no concern in it!—As I have not by me any particular account of your author, I will not rely on my memory, though it seems to tell me there were certain reasons which had operated rather strongly on his mind, and roused his resentment against the Legate. Crescentio however, insolent and haughty as he might have been, only presided, during some months,

months, over five out of the six sessions, which took place under Julius the third. Of these six, two only were of any length or importance.—

At this time, the proceedings of the council were, in a manner, suspended, whilst they waited the arrival of the German Protestants. To them, even under Crescentio, had been twice offered a *Salvus conductus*, or passport, in terms so clear and unambiguous, that the most timid breast could have nothing to apprehend. But they never arrived. May we infer, that they did not seriously desire an accommodation? The conditions at least which they proposed to the council were such, as they knew, the Fathers could not possibly accede to.

Who would not imagine from your statement of it (p. 152), that Crescentio presided during the whole time of the celebration of the council? Your readers might have been informed, that ten sessions had been held under Paul the third; that to these succeeded six, under Julius, when Crescentio

I presided,

presided, as I have said ; and that these were followed by nine more under Pius the fourth, when the council ended, anno 1563, having lasted, with different interruptions, for the space of 18 years.—Reflect, Sir, that the duties of an historian are important ; that he must with-hold no truth, and relate no falsehood.

A General
Council.

A council when duly convened, and when consisting of such a number of prelates, as assembled from different parts of the Catholic world, may, in the usual acceptation of the word, give it the appellation of *general*, is the *representative* body of the church. Whether the assembly at Trent answered this description, matters little, since its decrees, appertaining to *faith*, have been long ago universally accepted by us. *Discipline* is received agreeably to the established maxims of nations.—But in the concluding sessions it was numerous, and by these were confirmed the decrees of the foregoing assemblies. Innumerable were the obstructions to its progress from the beginning:
Princes

Princes refused to let their subjects proceed to Trent; their ambassadors embroiled the debates; the Protestants were clamorous, though they had before appealed to a council, and left nothing unattempted to impede the dispatch of business; whilst Rome, with its pompous court, apprehensive that a thorough plan of reform might approach too near to the Vatican, multiplied difficulties, and with-held its concurrence.—And should these circumstances be wholly disregarded, whilst the Protestant writer pours out his declamation, generally as unfounded, as it is unfair?

But though our prelates convened in council be our *representatives*, they are not more so, in this situation, than when dispersed and presiding over their respective churches: Nor have they any more extensive powers. When they meet, it is that their opinions may be more easily collected, and that a greater splendour may attend their decrees. But, in speaking of matters of belief, these *decrees* are but *declarations*,

tions, which, in words more full and explicit, announce the same doctrine, which had been before universally admitted.—These ministers, whether dispersed or assembled, are the *guardians*, and they are the *witnesses* of that faith, the *depositum* of which, from the apostolic ages, has been handed down to them.—Let us hear no more then of fallible men, or of the incredibility of the divine spirit directing their proceedings: For what very extraordinary co-operation is required, that men, habituated to the concerns of religion, should be able to declare, what doctrine they were taught, and what they then believe.—And this is that wondrous *infallibility*, about which reams of paper have been written, that would more than cover the whole surface of the globe!

The Pope.

The reader will here expect to find something about the Pope; and I will not disappoint him, provided he expect but little.—Never, I fancy, was there a well regulated society, without a *head*, of some form or other. Our
church

church is a *society*, the foundation of which, we conceive, was laid by Christ our legislator, consisting of members, the head over whom, or first ecclesiastical magistrate, is the Bishop of Rome, successor to St. Peter. The *representative* body are our prelates; the *represented* are the people; and at the head of this constitution is the Pope, in whose hands resides the principal executive power. But to him belongs no *absolute* or despotic jurisdiction; he is as much bound by the laws of the constitution, as is the lowest member of it: He has indeed his *prerogative*; but we have our privileges, and are independent on him, excepting where it has pleased the community, for the sake of unity and good order, to surrender into his hands a limited superintendence. It is his duty, and that particularly when our immediate pastors neglect theirs, to take care that the christian republic receive no injury; that is, that laws, which have been received, be duly executed, and that the infraction of them, by a co-ordinate punishment be chastised.—

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With princes or their states he has no concern ; and when, in former times, he interfered, it was from a strange misconception of things, and an extravagant abuse of power ; with which however, states and princes then co-operated. Those days are gone by ; and the time is come, when the influence of Rome is returning to its proper channel. When it shall be seen that his kingdom is not of this world ; that his jurisdiction is benevolent and paternal ; that he is but our first shepherd, and therefore that he is prudent, moderate, patient, meek, and humble ; that he is such a head, as a christian society requires : then will the Bishop of Rome be respected, and on that respect will be founded an authority, ample enough to fill the chair of St. Peter.

I excuse your reiterated declamation on this subject, because when the word *Pope* is sounded in the ears of a Protestant truly orthodox—and such you certainly would wish to appear—on the common principle of association, it raises

raises as many extravagant ideas, as the most capacious mind has room for. It is not very unlike what happens in a certain complaint, to which reasonable animals are alone liable; when at the mere mention of some one subject, the whole soul vibrates to the impression, and the patient is obliged to be tied down on his bed.—Why did you not attempt to prove him *antichrist*? There are *lecturers*, you know, whose duty it is never to let that important discussion sleep, and by some of these you may be chastised for the omission. Some small remains of attachment to an old master still hung about you perhaps, and for once curbed the wanton roving of your pen.

But how indeed has it roved on a thousand other trifles, equally ridiculous! With complacency you dwell, for instance, on practices, abuses, and follies, which are too common among the lower orders of people in some Catholic countries. These every man of sense condemns, but every man of sense cannot reform them. Gradually,
however,

Abuses and
follies in re-
ligion.

however, they are wearing out; and had you seen as much of France, as you have of Flanders, I think, your invective might have been less intemperate.—After all, when we consider that many of these practices are very ancient, and that often the amusements and gay hours of the people are connected with them, can it surprise a man of the least observation, that many obstacles should stand in the way of their suppression?—Some attention also should be given to the different genius and character of nations; they are not all of the same cast, and consequently the same modes, even in religious worship, are not equally adapted to all. What is pleasing to the sedate and pensive mind, will not accord with the more gay and animated. Here we must have ceremony, and the senses must be impressed; but when this takes place, here also will be more abuses.

Some things there are which even sensible minds are not willing to renounce, from a certain opposition, which they themselves may not always suspect.—

suspect.—At the reformation a general outcry was raised against every thing that had been in former practice: good, bad, and indifferent were thrown into one promiscuous heap, and a reform demanded of all. In this situation; even an ordinary degree of fortitude would not be disposed to give way; and because too much was asked, too little was granted. The same intemperance of clamour has, in some degree, been kept up to this day; and we have not been willing to recede. When the mind is irritated, even the most reasonable proposals will be sometimes combated. Unfortunately the first requisitions of the reformers were not, in the whole, admissible, and even had that *whole* been granted, another *whole*, I suspect, would have been ready at its heels. When certain barriers are crossed, there are passions, which nothing can reduce to order.

Had it not been for the opposition, to which I allude, one point even of very general discipline had long ago, I think, been altered: I mean that of

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retaining the Latin language in the public service of our church. It is very generally agreed that it would be a most salutary amendment: but it has not been done, because it was asked in too insolent a manner, because we are daily irritated by petulant reflections, and because we are not disposed to pray in the language of a Luther, a Calvin, or a Queen Elizabeth. — All this, Sir, strange as it may seem, is in the human heart, and of this heart even the foibles must not be irritated, when we wish to make our way to the head.

But if your *appeal*, as you insinuate, was intended to promote the spiritual improvement of your catholic neighbours; why produce this long list of abuses, from your Flemish repository, with which they can have no concern? They had never seen, perhaps never heard, of mawmets niched in churches; of altars hung round with eyes, legs, and arms; of the christening of bells, or the sprinkling of horses. — This, Sir, is too idle. Formerly, I recollect,

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we sometimes laughed at these things, we wished they were corrected, and we lamented that a creature, which is termed rational, could, even when he meant to serve his maker, deviate so strangely into folly: Little did I then suspect, that ever, from such indignities, you would draw arguments to vilify a religion, the genuine truth and beauty of which you could then join me to admire.—Must you attack the practices of the old church, let it be those of the catholics of England: and we will defend ourselves. It is not my concern, that Germans, Spaniards, or Italians, should run into a thousand extravagancies. As a Protestant, and from your late conversion, I presume, zealous, would you conceive yourself bound to be the apologist of some particular societies which, in the reformed churches, are said to be guilty of many follies, were I wantonly enough disposed to make them a subject of ridicule? The case is parallel.

You well observe in the advice, you say, you would give to an enquirer

who should ask it (p. 213;) “ That he should be solicitous to recommend his own belief, rather by shewing the influence it has over his own conduct, than by endeavouring to make proselytes to his opinions; through a *full persuasion* that it is *always unfriendly*, and *often fatal*, to unsettle the religious sentiments of our neighbours, unless thereby we are *certain* to make them both happier and better men.”— Do you recognize in these very just sentiments the conduct of the author of the *appeal*? Either he aimed to *unsettle* the opinions of those, to whom it is principally addressed; or he aimed at nothing. If the first, he is *fully persuaded*, it was *unfriendly* at least: If the second; why write three hundred and seventy nine very tedious pages? He surely could not be *certain*, that even a change of sentiments would make them both happier and better men.

Toleration.

Though already I have lightly touched on the subject of *Toleration*; there can be no impropriety in viewing it on
a larger

a larger scale.—With seeming generosity you sometimes talk of this great business ; you wish that the small share of it which we enjoy, “ were more extensive, and that every penal law, still in force against us were repealed.” But, in the same breath, with what peevishness do you add ; that “ several individuals daily shew, by their own intolerant sentiments and conduct, that they have little right even to the partial indulgence that has been granted.” (p. 30).—And you talk of christian burial refused to protestants in catholic countries ; of the decrees published against them in France ; and of the revocation of the edict of Nantes.—In another place you say ; that the moderation of government is without a parallel, with respect to certain books and pamphlets, which have been professedly written against the religion of the country ; that the authors of them have been but little molested ; and you are surpris'd, the magistrate has not prohibited their circulation ; in catholic countries such attacks, you think,

would

would not have been received with a like forbearance.

This, Sir, is the genuine language of intolerance ; it is the same spirit, under a thin disguise, which in 1780 nearly laid in ashes the capital of the British empire.—Who are those *several individuals*, whose *daily* conduct shews that they merit not the trifling indulgence they have received ? Produce them ; for you must know their names : they should be hung out *in terrorem* to others. Do that, and I will say you are a generous adversary ; if you decline it, permit me to say, that the charge is base.—The refusal of christian burial to protestants is, I confess it, a cruel circumstance ; it is come down from those barbarous ages, when the milder virtues of christianity were hardly felt. The practice cannot hold much longer. Already indeed, in most towns in France, is a portion of land allotted for the burial-place of protestants. Yet if churches must be intolerant, rather let its effects extend to the dead, than to the living. When

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an English protestant complains of this circumstance to *me* ; I look in his face, and wonder he does not blush.—If in France some kings, particularly of the house of Valois, were severe in their decrees against protestants ; has not England also had its Tudors and its Stuarts ? Alas ! *we* know it.—The revocation of the edict, you mention, was as oppressive, as it was impolitic ; and you may glory, that the British annals are not fouled with an event so disgraceful. But then under the influence of that edict, had the protestants of France enjoyed a repose of nearly a hundred years. The laws of England have not given as many moments to her catholic subjects, since the days of Elizabeth ; and do you think, we dare not at any period weigh merit with the disciples of John Calvin and Theodore Beza ?

As to books or pamphlets, few or none, that I recollect, have been professedly written against the religion of the country, unless perhaps where an attack had been first made, and provocation

cation given. Your *appeal* for instance, would justify any attack, I might be disposed to make on the established church, provided I could think you wrote it under any sanction of authority, or that your reflections were not the effusions of wanton caprice.—I blush, Sir, to hear you talk of the moderation of government, and the forbearance of magistrates. Does religion come under their cognizance; or are they to put barriers to the discussion of truth? You, it seems, may pour out a muddy stream of invective against the old church; and if I dare to reply, the magistrate shall point to the door of Newgate. This is the business of an inquisitor. Surely, Sir, your foreign education has supplied you with strange ideas; or you do not reflect, that England is the country which you and I now inhabit.

But in this land of boasted freedom; within whose rocks every virtue, that can give dignity to man, is said to dwell, what an instance of absurd conduct is exemplified in you and me.—

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We had the same education, professed the same religion ; and but a few months ago were equally under the lash of the same laws. You cease to be a Roman catholic, that is, you drop a few speculative opinions, become neither a better man, a better subject, or a better citizen ; when the next morning you rise to all the blessings of a free born subject, and I remain where I was, a slave among freemen ; the same naked sword, trembling by a single hair over my head, which any miscreant may cut that pleases. There is no exaggeration in this simple fact.

I cannot yet quit this subject of *toleration* ; it is you that have raised my mind to it, and if you have leisure, I will take you through the kingdoms of Europe ; and we will see what their dispositions are. Such travelling is not inconvenient, and our excursion shall be momentary. Should we discover that the country, which I love and honour, makes but a fordid figure in the splendid groupe ; let it be remembered that the fault is theirs, who can

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meanly submit to a circumstance so humiliating.

Germany.

What his Imperial Majesty has done in favour of his Protestant, and even Jewish subjects, is well known to all Europe; what was oppressive he has relaxed; and with the free practice of religion he gives to dissenters all the common rights of citizens.—This fair example has been followed by other catholic princes of the empire. In many states of Germany indeed, no such extension of religious liberty was wanted; because they had long possessed it in the fullest latitude. When christians of different persuasions can pray to God under the same roof, they will hardly be disposed to persecute. Germany may now be considered as the country of the freest toleration. The Emperor, it is sometimes said, has himself no religion: it may be so: but if that indulgence of disposition, which I commend, be thought to prove it, it would be well for mankind, if other princes had as little.

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The king of Prussia, a member of the Germanic body, is not, I believe, very religious ; but from all evil some good arises. He that is indifferent to modes of faith, will not be inclined to shew preference to any ; to him the best subject will be the best believer : at all events, the great man, of whom I am speaking, is too good a politician, to suppose that tests or penal restraints would recruit his armies.

In the vast territories of the Czarina, Russia. though the Greek may be called the established church, yet have all other sects their own altars, Jews, pagans, and mahometans. In the provinces her arms have conquered, this worthy successor of Peter the great, is too wise to pretend to any sovereignty over opinions ; and like the Romans may, in some sense, be said to adopt the gods of her new subjects. To those of the Roman catholic persuasion she has been particularly indulgent ; and has even granted an asylum to that society of men, which the catholic princes had precipitately banished from their states,

and Rome had been compelled to suppress: I speak of the jesuits, to whom the christian world has many obligations, and whom, from their first establishment, this country ever treated with peculiar distinction.

Poland. The prevailing religion of Poland is that of Rome: but by the laws, the dissidents, that is, the Protestant and Greek Christians, are entitled to toleration and protection. This they have not always found. Party, heated by religious zeal, has often risen into the wildest enthusiasm; and the consequences have been dreadful to those, whom the laws are bound to protect. The Polish government is radically vicious; and there lies the evil. However, the scenes, I allude to, will debase no more that nation, by nature brave and generous. Neighbouring Princes have kindly interfered, and by a partition of territory, and by subsequent regulations, have broken that high spirit which valued little the restraints of law. The dissidents will in future enjoy that liberty, to which,
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in common with the Jews and mahometans, they have a legal right.

The Lutheran doctrine is universally admitted through Denmark and Norway; nor hardly, I believe, is there any other sect of any visible consequence, unless in some few of the towns. In Copenhagen the catholics, not many years ago, applied for some indulgence, and it was granted; Were they more numerous, there is little doubt, but they would be further indulged. The government is mild, and not disposed to persecute. In Santa Cruz, one of their West India Islands, the Catholics enjoy full toleration, because they applied for it. Denmark.

The religion of Denmark is also professed in Sweden: but here it has all the stern features of northern despotism; though it was established by that hero and patriot, Gustavus Vasa, in 1544. The tenets of Martin Luther alone were tolerated; but it was against the Roman catholics that the severity of the laws was pointed. No Sweden.
court

court of inquisition ever framed such statutes, as Sweden holds out against Rome, particularly its clergy. Political views, it is well known, took the lead in these regulations, and drew in religion to give its sanction to them. Such in other countries also has been the mean practice of statesmen—But at the moment I am writing, a milder scene is opening before me. The Swedish monarch, who has travelled much, and who has therefore discovered that there are good subjects in all religions, seems determined to break through the savage institutes of his predecessors, and to oppress no man wrongfully. French politics, which have always great influence at Stockholm, doubtless operated to produce this happy revolution. His connexion with the Emperor, the milder air of Italy, and his intimacy with the Pope, have also contributed not a little to the same effect. It is said, that the King himself is building a church for his catholic subjects; whilst he grants them every other indulgence, and proffers all encouragement to strangers of that persuasion, who may
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be inclined to settle in his territories.
 —The catholics, in some parts of Sweden, are, I am told, rather numerous.

In the United Provinces, where Holland
 presbyterianism rules, all other sects are free. Catholics are under some restrictions, but they are not of an oppressive nature. Places of trust and high preferment are shut against them: nor could this well be otherwise; it was rather natural to expect that the religion, which their haughty masters, the Spaniards, had professed, would have been utterly proscribed. But religious zeal makes no deep impression on the heart of a Dutchman, when interest tells him what his duty is. The army and navy are open to Roman catholics.

In the cantons of Switzerland, Switzerland
 Calvinism and the religion of Rome are the leading persuasions. At the reformation violent commotions were raised by religious disputes, and their effects are sensibly felt to this hour. The harmony and mutual confidence which before

fore subsisted among the cantons, and were that chain which gave them strength, were then broken, and have since never been thoroughly repaired. The quarrels of free states are implacable.—It is often said, that the catholic religion naturally tends to despotism. The observation is not true. The purest democracy on earth is found among the cantons of the catholic persuasion; whilst the great protestant cantons have adopted aristocracy, the worst species of despotism. The bright days of Switzerland expired at the reformation.

Italy.

The established religion, in all the states of Italy, is well known to be the catholic; nor is any other tolerated: yet all sects are found there, and all may live without the smallest molestation, provided, keeping themselves within the bounds of decency, they insult not the religion of the country. Even the court of inquisition in the papal states, has nothing terrible in it; and our protestants know how kindly they are every where received. If you
talk

talk to me of religious freedom ; I would rather be a Jew in Rome than a Roman catholic in the capital of an empire, where liberty is vainly said to have fixed her throne.

But it is in the kingdoms of Spain and Portugal, that the catholic religion is thought to be most intolerant ; there it is securely guarded from every innovation by the eye of a jealous and severe court, which seems to hold controul almost over the thoughts of men. The inquisition was there instituted, principally as a barrier against the Jews and Moors, who had been expelled from Spain. It is the great state curb, by which the people are kept in religious and civil subjection. I have nothing to say in its defence ; but it is a question not perhaps to be so easily decided, even by a politician ; whether, in a country, where one religion alone is professed, it be expedient to permit the ingress of sectaries to spread their doctrines, to disturb the peace, and to divide the opinions of the people ? Might this be done without opposition, which

Spain and
Portugal,

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is impossible, some good of a partial nature would perhaps arise : but when we look to what has happened in other countries, surely ignorance with all its concomitants must be infinitely preferable to an eternal breach of concord and the horrors of civil war. However, as in the kingdoms, of which I am speaking, there is but one religion ; no sects or bodies of christians can complain of oppression ; and this it is that in other states pleads so loudly for toleration. In propriety of language therefore I do not see that Spain or Portugal can be termed *intolerant*.

France.

To France, our rival in arms, in arts, and in literature, is the eye of an Englishman ever turned, when he is disposed to compare nations. There only one religion prevails : let us see then what is her behaviour towards that large body of dissenters which, for more than two centuries, has existed in the country.—France was in the undisturbed practice of the religion of her ancestors, when Calvinism, secretly having wormed itself into the minds
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of many, boldly reared its head, and demanded a free exercise of religion. The demand was intemperate ; it was refused ; an opposition was raised ; the minds were irritated ; and both parties at length flew to arms. Under the cloak of religious zeal enormities are committed on both sides ; but as the catholic party was the most powerful, and generally led on by men of the most abandoned principles, the greatest atrocity of conduct seems rather to belong to them. At the head of the Hugonots were men, whose splendid virtues would have given dignity to a much worse cause than theirs. After various events, during a dreadful period of more than 40 years, the Calvinists finally obtained from their old friend and general, the great and good Henry, that famous edict of Nantes, which gave them the indulgence and protection for which they had so long contended. But this same edict was repealed, near a hundred years after, in 1685, by Lewis XIV, on whom his ministers had imposed, and in whose mind pretended zealots had raised false

impressions of religious duty. The Hugonots at least had not merited this cruel reverse of fortune: from this time they have lived in a state of oppression.

The laws which, at different periods, have been made against them, and which continue in force, are extremely severe. But it must be allowed, that they were a dangerous and powerful party, from whom the religion, if not the civil constitution of France, had every thing to apprehend. Milder treatment perhaps would have softened the harsh features of Calvinism. Their grievances are daily lightened: of what they principally complain now is, that they must conform to the established church in the celebration of marriage; that their children must be baptised according to the Roman rite; that these children may be taken from them to be educated in the religion of the country; and that they are not allowed either minister or churches for the exercise of their religion.—These, it must be owned, are serious grievances.

I have

I have been present in the South of France, when more than five thousand people were assembled to worship their maker in a retired valley, exposed to the rays of a scorching sun; and even this was illegal.—But the army is open to them, and a particular order has been instituted to reward their military services. Besides, as in that country, the king can dispense with the laws, application is daily made to him, and he relaxes their severity, when and in what degree he pleases. Absolute power is not always without its advantages.—The protestants in France are now thought to be very numerous; and as there seems to be a growing benevolence towards them, among all orders of the state, in a few years we may expect to see a most fortunate revolution in their favour.

Of the hardships, which I have mentioned, and of which the French protestants so loudly complain, there is but one, that does not affect the catholics of England. Then how many circumstances are there which render the

England.

the situation of the latter peculiarly hard?—When the reformation began, we were in the possession of our religion: this the French Calvinists cannot alledge.—At the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth, when we were the strongest party, never had we recourse to violence, or drew the sword in our defence; the same rule of moderation we have pursued to this day: nor can the French say this.—We are now an inconsiderable body, warmly attached to our king and country, and, if it may have any claim to respect, the blood in our veins is generous and honourable: the Hugonots say, they are three millions of souls, and their attachment to government is not, I suspect, the most sincere. When news came of the relief of Gibraltar, I well remember the animated countenance of a minister of that religion, with whom I was conversing.—Our young men would enter the army or navy; this is not allowed them, and they are compelled to seek for bread under some foreign standard: I have said how it is in France.—In a word, as with us, there

is no power above the laws, so cannot their rigour be mitigated; otherwise we should presume to think that he who has accepted our *allegiance*, would deign to *protect* us from oppression: the French monarch can be more indulgent to his protestant subjects.

The subject is not half exhausted, but I must leave it. To discuss it fully, would require a small volume; and, if I continue in my present disposition, I shall perhaps resume it on some other occasion. I promised you but a momentary excursion: the many objects that fell in our way have detained us longer. What think you, Sir, of our own country? Does it seem, from this imperfect view, to take the lead of other nations in moderation, and in indulgence to the religious weaknesses, if you will, of its citizens? and observe also, that Roman catholics are not the only body of christians, who have penal grievances to complain of. —How unchristian is all intolerance; but how absurd likewise is it in a protestant

testant state! every principle of the reformation is contrary to it: but the liberty, which the reformed churches either asked, or took to themselves, they are not always disposed to give to others. Man truly is a selfish being.

Conclusion.

Such, Sir, were the *reflections*, which rose in my mind, on the cursory perusal of your *appeal*; when a few days after I reviewed myself, I saw they were still floating on the surface; I drew them together, and I give them to you, simple and unornamented, as is the general stock, I can properly call my own.—I have not read the *postscript* to the *appeal*: you say it has no necessary connexion with it: and such a *postscript*, to judge from its outward form, hardly, I fancy, was ever penned! Thoughtful hours I have, and to such you say, you devote it; but when the work itself has had a certain share of thought, what claim has its postscript to ask for more? Besides, other matters there are, which have a prior demand on the little attention
it

it is in my power to bestow, and I cannot deprive them of it.

I mean not this tract as a reply to your work ; it only contains a few observations bearing some reference to it : but should it be found that there is truth, in some of them particularly ; the main substance of your *appeal* must crumble into dust. I would not write a long work, because I hate to read one.—The gentleman, whom your *appeal* principally regards, may perhaps judge it expedient to enter on a fuller discussion. Should he do it, I wish him a prosperous voyage. Not that the attempt would demand any vast researches ; but because to follow you from page to page, through such a wilderness of matter, would take the smile even from the face of patience. How you got through is best known to yourself. The firen, that sat by your side, must have charmed away toil, and made the journey easy.

A few only, out of the points I have just touched upon, are peculiarly interesting,

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teresting, and on them I have been more diffuse. I wished to bring them before the public in a form that might raise some attention. Novelty, you must be sensible, is not to be expected, and therefore some address is necessary to throw any interest on so heavy and antiquated an enquiry. The light, in which I have presented the question, on the authority of the church, and the nature of the written word, is not, I know, exactly the common one ; but to my apprehension, it is the only true one, and by it is removed a weight of difficulties, which otherwise attend the discussion. Protestants will not accede to it ; but I am ready to meet you or any one upon the question, and to give it every further elucidation, it may seem to require.

You may think, I have been somewhat severe, even not liberal, in supposing it was Love, that could have worked a change in your religious sentiments.—As to asperity ; turn your mind back to several passages in your appeal, and there you will find my
apology.

apology. You would have chosen, I dare say, a more placid adversary ; one that would have dipped his pen in milk ; and then you would have said, that he feared you. By nature I am not very tame ; nor did I see the least necessity of saying soft things upon this occasion. Controversy must be a little animated ; but let truth, candour, and honesty, hold the pen down every page. From this rule I have not departed.—As to love ; what must I say ? Effects in the moral world have all their certain causes, and out of these we must chuse what seem most adequate to the point. We cannot enter into the heart of man, but if we could, there perhaps we should discover motives and springs of action, which the owner of that heart might little suspect to be there. So true is it, that we do not know ourselves. At all events, the construction I put on your conduct, I am very willing shall be laid on mine, if ever, by any strange impulse of soul, I should be drawn to an imitation of your example.

I should close this address, I perceive, with something pathetic. In some humours I might ; but now I cannot. I always write as I feel. For this declaration, on a former occasion, I have been censured : but it is this circumstance, if I am not mistaken, that sometimes gives an air of originality to writing, and sometimes a varied strength of colouring, which should not displease. The eye that, with pleasure, can dwell on one uniform unbroken scene, was hardly designed for the head of a thinking being. However, we have all our tastes, and our different turns of character. Experience, it seems, should give stability to them ; yet there are minds which, like the shifting sands of Africa, never know what it is to settle. Are you, Sir, sure that the established church will hold you as long as ours did ? Freed but once from the restraint of authority, creeds and tests of churches should never reach me more. I would adopt, in this country, a much more rational faith than you have done.

The

The short *exposition* of our belief, which I subjoin to these sheets for reasons I shall assign, I recommend to your reflection. Meet it with your own creed, if you have one ready, and compare them together. Some advantage may be derived from the comparison.

I am, &c.

Oscott, Nov. 26, 1785.



ROMAN CATHOLIC
PRINCIPLES,

IN REFERENCE TO

God and the Country.



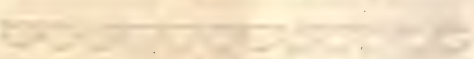



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ROMAN CATHOLIC PRINCIPLES, &c.

INTRODUCTION.

THE following short *Exposition* of Catholic principles, I have had by me for some years. I took it from an old collection of controversial tracts; and I presume, there may be other copies of it. Who the author of it was, I know not, nor when it was published; but I fancy, about the middle of the reign of Charles the second. Its conciseness and precision of expression are admirable: In few words it says all we wish to say, because it contains all we profess to believe. They, to whom it has been read, admired it as much as I do, and they wished it might be given to the public. I do it with pleasure;

O

for

for its merit will serve to buoy up the preceding *Reflections*. I have other motives for it, which are not so selfish. It will tell the Protestant and Catholic, what our real tenets are, and it will tell the former in particular, that what we now believe, was the belief also of our grandfathers. Our essential principles, as christians, and as citizens, we have not changed. I think likewise I can, on this occasion, take upon me to declare that, there is not a Roman Catholic in the realm who will refuse, if asked, to set his hand to this *Exposition*. If any thing else be still wanting to satisfy the mind of the most prejudiced Anti-papist; let it be said. I have made some alterations; but they are few, and of little consequence.

SECTION I.

Of the Catholic Faith and Church in general.

1. THE fruition of God, and the remission of sin are not attainable by man, otherwise than *in and by the merits of Jesus Christ*, who *gratuitously* purchased them for us (a).

2. These

(a) Eph. ii. 8.

2. These merits of Christ, though infinite in themselves, are not applied to us, otherwise than by a *right faith* in him (b).

3. This faith is but *one* (c), entire, and conformable to its object, which is *divine revelation*; and to which *faith* gives an undoubting assent.

4. This *revelation* contains many *mysteries*, transcending the natural reach of human understanding (d). Wherefore,

5. It became the divine *wisdom* and *goodness* to provide some *way* or *means*, whereby man might arrive to the *knowledge* of these *mysteries*; means *visible* and *apparent* to all (e); means *proportioned* to the capacities of all (f); means *sure* and certain to all (g).

6. This way or means is not the *reading of scripture*, interpreted according to the *private judgment* (h) of each disjunctive person, or nation in particular; But,

O 2

7. It

(b) Mark xvi. 16.

Heb. xi. 6.

(c) Eph. iv. 5.

(d) 1 Cor. i. 20.

Matt. xvi. 17.

(e) John ix. 41.

(f) Matt. xi. 25.

(g) John xv. 22.

(h) 2 Pet. iii. 16.

1 John, iv. 1, 6.

7. It is an *attention* and *submission* (i) to the voice of the *Catholic* or *Universal Church*, established by Christ for the instruction of all; spread for that end through all *nations* (k), and *visibly* (l) continued in the succession of pastors, and people through all *ages*.—From this church *guided in truth* (m) and secured from *error* in matters of *faith*, by the *promised* (n) *assistance of the Holy Ghost*, every one may *learn* the right sense of the *scriptures*, and such christian *mysteries* and *duties*, as are necessary to salvation.

8. This church, thus established, thus spread, thus continued, thus guided, in *one uniform faith* (o), and *subordination* of government, is that which is termed the *Roman Catholic Church*: The qualities just mentioned, *unity*, *indeficiency*, *visibility*, *succession*, and *universality*, being evidently applicable to her.

9. From the *testimony* and *authority* of this church, it is, that we receive the *scriptures*, and believe them to be the *word of God*: And as she can *assuredly* (p) tell us what particular

(i) Matt. xviii. 17.

Luke x. 16.

(k) Matt. xxviii. 19.

(l) Matt. v. 14.

(m) John xvi. 13.

Matt. xvi. 18.

(n) Matt. xxviii. 20.

John xiv. 16.

(o) John x. 16.

Ib. xvii. 20, 21, 22.

(p) 1 Tim. iii. 15.

ticular book is the *word of God*, so can she with the like *assurance* tell us, also the true *sense* and *meaning* of it, in controverted points of *faith*; the same *spirit* that wrote the scriptures, *directing* her (q) to understand both them, and all matters necessary to salvation.—From these grounds it follows,

10. Only *truths revealed* by Almighty God, and *proposed* by the church to be believed *as such*, are, and ought to be esteemed, *articles* of Catholic faith.

11. As an *obstinate separation* from the *unity* of the church, in *known* matters of faith, is *heresy*: So a *wilful separation* from the *visible* unity of the same church, in matters of *subordination* and *government*, is *schism*.

SECTION II.

Of spiritual and temporal Authority.

1. THE *pastors* of the church, who are the body *representative*, either dispersed or convened in *council*, have received no commission from Christ, to frame *new articles of faith*—these being solely *divine revelations*—but only
to

(q) John xiv. 26.

to *explain* and to *define* to the faithful, what anciently was, and is received and retained, as of *faith* in the church, when *debates* and *controversies* arise about them. These *definitions* in *matters of faith* only, and proposed as *such*, oblige all the faithful to a *submission of judgment*. But,

2. It is no article of faith; that the church cannot *err*, either in matters of *fact* or *discipline*, alterable by circumstances of time and place, or in matters of *speculation* or *civil policy*, depending on mere human judgment or testimony. These things are no revelations *deposited* in the Catholic church, in regard of which alone, she has the *promised assistance* of the holy spirit.—Hence it is deduced,

3. If a *general council*, much less a *papal consistory*, should presume to *depose a king*, and to *absolve his subjects* from their *allegiance*, no *Catholic* could be bound to *submit* to such a *decree*.—Hence also it follows that,

4. The subjects of the king of England lawfully may, without the least breach of any *catholic principle*, renounce, upon oath, the teaching or practising the *doctrine of deposing kings* excommunicated for heresy, by any authority whatsoever, as repugnant to the *fundamental laws* of the nation, as injurious to
sovereign

sovereign power, as destructive to *peace and government*, and consequently in his Majesty's subjects, as *impious and damnable*.*

5. Catholics believe that the Bishop of Rome, successor of *St. Peter*, is the *head of the whole Catholic church*; in which sense, this church may therefore fitly be stiled *Roman Catholic*, being an *universal body*, united under *one visible head*. Nevertheless,

6. It is *no matter of faith* to believe, that the *Pope* is in himself *infallible*, separated from the church, even in *expounding the faith*: By consequence *papal definitions or decrees*, in whatever form pronounced, taken exclusively from a *general council*, or *universal acceptance of the church*, oblige none, under *pain of heresy*, to an interior assent.

7. Nor do Catholics, *as Catholics*, believe that the *Pope* has any direct, or indirect *authority* over the *temporal power* and jurisdiction of *princes*. Hence, if the *Pope* should pretend

* The word *damnable* I dislike ; to me it conveys no idea ; or if any, it says too much : But I let it stand to shew, how desirous our ancestors were, by the most emphatical language, to express their detestation of the *papal deposing power*. The word *impious* surely says enough.— I wish to know what idea a Protestant affixes to the word *heretical*, which, in the *oath of supremacy*, he applies to the deposing doctrine.

tend to *absolve* or *dispense* with his Majesty's subjects from their *allegiance*, on account of *heresy* or *schism*, such *dispensation* would be *vain* and *null*; and all Catholic subjects, notwithstanding such *dispensation* or *absolution*, would be still bound in conscience to defend their king and country, at the hazard of their lives and fortunes, (as far as Protestants would be bound), even *against the Pope* himself, in case he should invade the nation.*

8. As for the *problematical disputes*, or errors of particular divines, in this or any other matter whatsoever, we are no wise *responsible* for them; nor are Catholics, *as Catholics*, justly *punishable* on their account. But,

9. As for the *king-killing doctrine*, or murder of princes, excommunicated for heresy; it is universally admitted in the Catholic church, and expressly so declared by the council of *Constance*, that such doctrine is *impious* and *execrable*, being contrary to the known *laws* of God and nature.

10. *Personal misdemeanors*, of what nature soever, ought not to be *imputed* to the Catholic church,

* This is an idle supposition: But at the time this *Exposition* was framed, the Pope was a much greater bugbear, than now he is. At all times indeed we have had enough to do with the hobgoblins of the imagination.

church, when not justifiable by the *tenets* of her faith and doctrine. For which reason; though the stories of the *Irish cruelties*, or *powderplot*, had been exactly true, (which yet for the most part are notoriously mis-related) nevertheless Catholics, as such, ought not to suffer for such *offences*, any more than the eleven apostles ought to have suffered for the *treachery* of *Judas*.*

11. It is a *fundamental truth* in our religion, that no *power* on earth can *license* men to *lie*, to *forswear* or *perjure* themselves, to *massacre* their neighbours, or *destroy* their native country, on pretence of *promoting the Catholic cause or religion*: Furthermore, *all pardons or dispensations* granted, or pretended to be granted, in order to any such *ends* or designs, could have no other validity or effect, than to add *sacrilege* and *blasphemy* to the above-mentioned crimes.

12. The doctrine of *equivocation* or mental reservation, however wrongfully imputed to the church, was never taught, or approved by her, as any part of her belief: On the
P contrary,

* These *stories* are more than mis-related; for there is *no truth* in either, as ascribed to the Irish or English Catholics at large. *Gunpowder treason*, or *Cecil's plot* is one of those red-lettered solemnities, which do so much honour to this enlightened nation!

contrary, *simplicity* and *godly sincerity* are constantly inculcated by her as truly *christian virtues*, necessary to the conservation of *justice, truth* and *common security*.

SECTION III.

Of other Points of Catholic Faith.

1. WE believe, that there are seven *sacraments* or sacred ceremonies, instituted by our Saviour Christ, whereby the *merits* of his passion are *applied* to the soul of the worthy receiver.

2. We *believe*, that when a sinner (a) repents of his sins from the *bottom* of his *heart*, and *acknowledges* his transgressions to God and his (b) *ministers, the dispensers of the mysteries of Christ*, resolving to turn from his evil ways, (d) and *bring forth fruits worthy of penance*; there is then, and *no otherwise*, an authority left by Christ to *absolve* such a *penitent sinner* from his sins: Which authority, we believe, Christ gave to his *apostles* and their *successors*, the *bishops* and *priests* of his church,
in

(a) 2 Cor. vii. 10. (d) Luke iii. 8.

(b) Acts xix. 18.

1 Cor. iv. 1.

in those words, when he said, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven unto them, &c.* (e)

3. Though no creature whatsoever can make condign *satisfaction* (f), either for the guilt of sin, or the *pain eternal* due to it; (g) this *satisfaction* being proper to Christ our Saviour only; yet *penitent sinners* redeemed by Christ may, as *members* of Christ, in some measure (h) *satisfy* by prayer, fasting, alms-deeds, and other works of piety, for the *temporal pain*, which in the order of divine justice sometimes remains due, after the *guilt* of sin and *pains eternal* have been remitted. Such *penitential works* are, notwithstanding, no otherwise *satisfactory* than as *joined* and applied to that *satisfaction*, which Jesus made upon the cross, in virtue of which *alone* all our good works find a grateful acceptance in the sight of God. (i)

4. The *guilt of sin*, or *pain eternal* due to it, is *never* remitted by what Catholics call *indulgences*; but only such *temporal punishments* (k) as remain due after the guilt is remitted: These *indulgences* being nothing else

P 2: *indulgences* than

(e) John xx. 23.

(f) Tit. iii. 5.

(g) 2 Cor. iii. 5.

(h) Acts xxvi. 20.

Luke xi. 41.

(i) 1 Pet. ii. 5.

(k) 1 Cor. v. 5, &c.

than a (l) *mitigation* or *relaxation*, upon just causes, of *canonical penances*, enjoined by the pastors of the church on penitent sinners, according to their several degrees of demerit. And if abuses or mistakes have been sometimes committed, in point either of granting or gaining *indulgences*, through the remissness or ignorance of particular persons, contrary to the ancient custom and discipline of the church: Such abuses or mistakes cannot rationally be charged on the church, or rendered matters of derision, in prejudice to her faith and discipline.

5. Catholics hold there is a *purgatory*, that is to say, a place or state, where souls departing this life, with remission of their sins, as to the eternal guilt or pain, but yet *obnoxious* to some temporal *punishment*, of which we have spoken, still remaining due, or not perfectly freed from the blemish of some *defects* (m) or deordinations, are *purged* (n) before their admittance into heaven, where nothing that is *defiled* can enter. Furthermore,

6. Catholics also hold, that such souls so detained in *purgatory*, being the *living members* of Christ Jesus, are *relieved* by the *prayers* and *suffrages* of their *fellow-members* here on earth:

(l) 2 Cor. ii. 10.

(n) 1 Cor. iii. 15.

(m) Matt. xii. 36.

earth: But where this place is; of what nature or quality the pains are; how long souls may be there detained; in what manner the *suffrages* made in their behalf are applied; whether by way of *satisfaction* or *intercession*, &c. are questions superfluous, and impertinent as to faith.

7. No man, though *just*, (o) can merit either an increase of sanctity in this life, or eternal glory in the next, independently on the merits and passion of Christ Jesus: But the *good works* (p) of a just man proceeding from *grace* and *charity*, are so far *acceptable* to God, through his goodness and sacred *promises*, as to be truly *meritorious* of eternal life.

8. It is an article of Catholic belief, That in the most holy sacrament of the *Eucharist*, there is truly and really contained the (q) *body* of Christ, *which was delivered for us*, and *his blood*, *which was shed for the remission of sins*; the substance of *bread* and *wine* being, by the powerful words of Christ, *changed* into the *substance* of his blessed body and blood, the *species* or appearances of *bread* and *wine*,
by

(o) John xv. 5.

(p) Matt. xvi. 27.

2 Cor. v. 10.

(q) Matt. xxvi. 26, &c.

Mark xiv. 22, &c.

Luke xxii. 19, &c.

1 Cor. xi. 23, &c.

by the will of God, remaining as they were.
But,

9. Christ is not present in this sacrament, according to his *natural* way of existence, or rather as *bodies* naturally exist, but in a manner proper to the character of his exalted and *glorified* body: His presence then is *real* and *substantial*, but *sacramental*, not exposed to the external senses, or obnoxious to corporal contingencies.

10. Neither is the body of Christ, in this holy sacrament, *separated* from his blood, or his blood from his body, or either of them disjoined from his soul and divinity; but all and whole (r) *living Jesus* is *entirely* contained under *either* species; so that whosoever receives under *one kind* is truly partaker of the *whole* sacrament; he is not deprived either of the body or the blood of Christ. True it is,

11. Our Saviour left unto us his body and blood, under two *distinct species* or kinds; in doing of which he instituted not only a *sacrament*, but also a *sacrifice*; (s) a *commemorative sacrifice* distinctly (t) *shewing* his death and bloody passion, *until he come*. For as the *sacrifice of the cross* was performed by a distinct

(r) John vi. 48, &c.

(t) 1 Cor. xi. 26.

(s) Luke xxii. 19, &c.

tinged *effusion of blood*, so is that sacrifice commemorated in that of the *altar*, by a *distinction of the symbols*. Jesus therefore is here *given*, not only *to us*, but *for us*; and the church thereby is enriched with a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice, usually termed the *mass*.

12. Catholics renounce all *divine worship* and adoration of *images* and *pictures*; God alone we *worship and adore* (u); nevertheless we place pictures in our churches, to reduce our wandering thoughts, and to enliven our memories towards *heavenly things*. Further, we shew a certain *respect* to the images of Christ and his saints, beyond what is due to every prophane figure; not that we can believe any *divinity* or virtue to reside in them, for which they ought to be honoured, but because the honour given to pictures is referred to the *prototype* or thing represented. In like manner,

13. There is a kind of honour and respect due to the *bible*, to the *cross*, to the name of *Jesus*, to *churches*, to the *sacraments*, &c. (w) as things peculiarly appertaining to God; and to *kings*, *magistrates*, and *superiors* on earth (x); to whom honour is due, honour may

(u) Luke iv. 8.

(x) 1 Pet. ii. 17.

(w) Phil. ii. 10.

Rom. xiii. 7.

Acts xix. 12.

may be given, without any derogation to the majesty of God, or that divine worship which is appropriate to him. Moreover,

14. Catholics believe, That the blessed saints in heaven, replenished with charity, (y) *pray* for us their *fellow-members* here on earth; that they (z) *rejoice at our conversion*; that seeing God (a) they *see and know in him* all things suitable to their happy state: But God may be inclinable to hear their *requests* made in our behalf, and for their sakes may grant us many favours: Therefore we believe that it is *good* and *profitable* to *desire* their *intercession*. Can this manner of *invocation* be more injurious to Christ our *mediator*, than it is for one christian to beg the prayers (b) of another here on earth? However, Catholics are not taught so to rely on the *prayers* of others, as to neglect their own (c) *duty* to God; in *imploring* his *divine mercy* and *goodness*; (d) in mortifying the *deeds of the flesh*; in (e) *despising* the world; in *loving* and *serving* (f) God and their neighbour; in following the *footsteps* of Christ our Lord,

who

(y) Rev. v. 8.

(z) Luke xv. 7.

(a) 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

(b) Rom. xv. 30.

(c) Jam. ii. 17, &c.

(d) Rom. xiii. 14.

(e) Rom. xii. 2.

(f) Gal. v. 6.

who is the (g) *way*, the *truth*, and the *life*;
to whom be honour and glory for ever and
ever. Amen.

Joseph Perington.

December 1, 1785.

(g) John xiv. 6.

F I N I S.

Q



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EXPEDIENCY OF A GENERAL REPEAL OF ALL
PENAL STATUTES THAT REGARD
RELIGIOUS OPINIONS.

L O N D O N :

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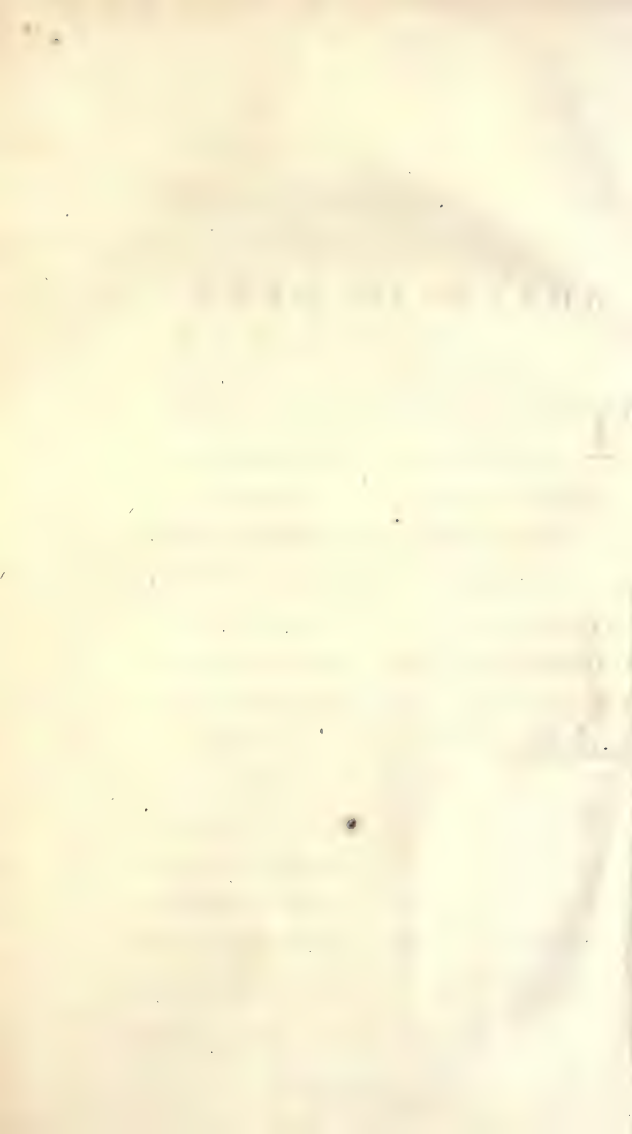
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A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

TH E following Letter was written before the CASE of the Dissenters was agitated in the House of Commons; but was then suppressed from motives of delicacy. As these no longer exist, it is offered to the public in its primitive form, with the addition of only a note or two, occasioned by some recent pamphlets on the same subject.



L E T T E R

T O A

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, &c.

A Printed sheet was, a few days ago, put into my hand, entitled, *The Case of the Protestant Dissenters, with reference to the Test and Corporation Acts*. The intention of it is to move the legislature to repeal such parts of these acts, as exclude from military and civil offices all who re-

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ceive

ceive not the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, according to the usage of the church of England, within three months after their admittance, or one year before their election, if their office be a corporation one.

Although I sincerely wish the *protestant dissenters* success in their application to parliament, having ever considered such tests as inimical to civil as well as to religious liberty, and often a source of the vilest hypocrisy; yet I am sorry to be obliged to say, that, in the paper now before me, there is a manifest partiality in the statement of facts, and an illiberality of sentiment in the mode of reasoning, of which I did not think the *protestant dissenters* of the present day capable: and I am persuaded, that many protestant dissenters are of the same opinion with myself.—Would the enlightened Price, or the candid Priestley have drawn up such a *case?*

It sets forth, that the act of the twenty-fifth of Charles the Second must have been made “ wholly against PAPISTS ; and not
 “ to prevent any danger which could hap-
 “ pen to the nation or church from Pro-
 “ testant Dissenters.”—Why ? Because,

First, the act is called “ an act for pre-
 “ venting dangers, which may happen from
 “ popish recusants.”

Secondly, From the circumstances in which it was formed ; namely, the suspension of the penal laws, in favour of papists—our being in war with a protestant state ; and the Duke of York’s open profession of popery.

Let us see how far these assertions accord with the whole tenor of Charles’s reign, the general disposition of the nation during that period, and the constant opposition which the established religion has ever since made

to the repeal of that act: although it is evident that, both from prior and posterior acts against *papists*, it can neither serve nor injure *them* in the least degree.

I hardly think, that it will be seriously asserted, that at the Restoration, the Roman catholics were a party dangerous or redoubtable to either church or state: whereas, at that time “prelacy and presbytery struggled for the superiority,”* and their mutual animosities were carried to the greatest height.

The episcopal party, however, prevailed. In the parliament of 1661, the bishops were restored to their places in the house of lords; and in the house of commons no more than fifty-six of the presbyterian party had obtained seats. The corporation act of this year is an evident proof that the parlia-

* Hume, Vol. VII. p. 369, last edit. 8vo.

ment dreaded that party, and meant to depress them.*

The act of uniformity in 1662 is still more flagrant. It was, says Hume, “ a pledge of the sincere attachment of parliament to the episcopal hierarchy, and of their antipathy to presbyterians.” In fact, two thousand clergymen of that persuasion were, in consequence, turned out of their livings.

This could not be ascribed to the king or court. For though Charles hated, and had reason to hate, the dissenters, his easy na-

* The author of the *Case* grants, that, “ probably,” this act, at least, was levelled at them. He should, with Lord Mansfield, have said, “ that it was most certainly intended by the legislature to prohibit the persons therein described being elected to any corporation offices, and to disable them from taking any such offices upon them.” See his speech in the house of lords, 4th Feb. 1767, in the Appendix to Dr. Furneaux’s Letters, p. 260.

tural disposition, and his wish to serve the catholic party who had suffered so much in the royal cause, and whom he knew to be strongly attached to regal power, made him propose to his parliament, the very next year (1663), a general toleration in favour of protestant dissenters, and to catholics the free private exercise of their religion.—“ But the declared intention of easing the dissenters, and the secret purpose of favouring catholics, were equally disagreeable to that parliament.”* And the commons represented “ that the indulgence intended would prove most pernicious both to church and state, would open the door to schism, encourage faction, disturb the public peace, and discredit the wisdom of the legislature.” At the same time, they solicited and obtained a proclamation against

* Hume, Vol. VII. p. 386, last edit. 8vo.

the papists; which, however, was not strictly executed.

The parliament of 1664 discovered a continuance of the same principles, which had prevailed in the preceding ones.—
 “ Monarchy and the church were still the
 “ great objects of regard and affection.”
 The act of uniformity was not deemed sufficient to guard them from the designs of sectaries. It was enacted, “ that where-
 “ ever five persons, above those of the same
 “ household, should assemble in a religious
 “ congregation, every one of them was
 “ liable to imprisonment or a fine.”

In 1665, it was enacted that no dissenting teacher, who took not the non-resistance oath, should come within five miles of any place where he had formerly preached after the act of oblivion, under the penalty of six months imprisonment, and sixty pounds.

Not content with this, the church-party introduced a bill, for imposing the oath of non-resistance on the whole nation : and it was rejected only by three voices.

After Clarendon's dismissal and disgrace, in 1667, the dissenters began to make head again. But the success of that ill-advised measure, the re-establishing episcopacy in Scotland, shews that the high-church party were still superior, and determined to keep under the presbyterians. Acts were passed in both the English and Scottish parliaments for preventing and suppressing conventicles.

But what, above all, shews the complexion of those times, is that when Buckingham's party, in 1668, had laid a plan to reconcile and unite the presbyterians by a comprehension act ; and to grant to all sectaries (papists excepted) a toleration, and free exercise of their religion ; the commons
were

were so disgusted at this proposal, which had met with the court's approbation, that they immediately voted an address for a proclamation against conventicles; and, suspecting that the king still meant to do something in favour of the protestant dissenters, they passed a vote that no one should bring into the house any bill of that nature. And it was, after all, with some difficulty that they were prevailed upon to vote a supply.

It cannot be said that the comprehension scheme was intended, *ostensively* to relieve protestant dissenters; but *really* to favour the catholics: the latter were expressly excluded from its operation; and no cause can be assigned for its giving such umbrage to parliament, but the danger they thought the church and state in from such a concession to dissenters.

The year after (1669) the act against conventicles

venticles passed, and received the royal assent. In this act there is this curious clause, "That if any dispute arise with regard to the interpretation of any part of it, the judges shall always explain the doubt in the sense least favourable to conventicles." So eagerly did parliament desire to suppress them.

Hitherto, then, it is plain that the puritans, not the papists, were the principal eye-sore to the English parliament; which, as the court expressed a wish to extend indulgence to them, prevented or frustrated the intention by some new intolerant act or resolve.

Things now, however, began to take another turn. The pernicious counsels of the new cabal—the unpopular rupture with the Dutch—the close league with France, and the Duke of York's declaring himself a
Roman

Roman catholic, gave rise to new alarms about popery; which the long prorogation of parliament, and a proclamation suspending the penal laws, prodigiously increased. Yet the proclamation for suspending the penal laws, whilst it gave to protestant dissenters the public exercise of their religion, to catholics allowed only the exercise of theirs in private houses. The observation of Hume on this proclamation is, that “the dissenters, “the most inveterate enemies of the court, “were mollified with these indulgent maxims; and the catholics, under their shelter, “enjoyed more liberty than the laws had “hitherto allowed them.”* That is, the court, in order to give some small degree of toleration to catholics, whom it considered among its best friends, gave a full toleration to dissenters, though it knew them to be its “most inveterate enemies.”

* Vol. VII. p. 477.

To this declaration the lord keeper refused to affix the great seal; and when, at the meeting of parliament, the king insisted on his right to exercise this part of his prerogative, he met with such vigorous opposition from his commons, as obliged him to depart from it. He revoked the suspending declaration, and with his own hand tore off the seals.

Still the clamours against popery were industriously kept up, and propagated; the dissenters joining in the cry, and endeavouring, by that means, to fix on the papists only, the suspicions and distrust, that had hitherto more particularly fallen on themselves.

It was at this conjuncture, that the act alluded to in the *Case* was made: and from the title of the act, the writer infers that it was never meant to include protestant dissenters.

senters. But I beg leave to affirm with Dr.
 Furneaux (Letters to Blackstone, Let. I. note,
 p. 12.) that “ to illustrate or to explain acts
 “ of parliament is one thing; to restrain
 “ or limit them another: whether they
 “ amount to more than their titles express,
 “ must be determined by the words or
 “ clauses of the act itself. The test-act sup-
 “ plies us with a case in point; it being *an*
 “ *act for preventing dangers arising from po-*
 “ *pish recusants*; and yet every one knows it
 “ is so drawn as to comprehend protestant
 “ dissenters.” Indeed, whoever reads the
 whole act with attention, and compares it
 with the history of the times, will, I think,
 clearly perceive that, though to quiet the
 minds of the people alarmed with dangers
 (real or imaginary) from popery, it be in
 the preamble held forth as an act against
popish recusants; it is equally at least, if not
 more especially, levelled at protestant dis-
 senters.

senters. The truth appears to be, that the court party still wished to favour the catholics; but as the tide of popular prejudice against that body was every day rising higher and higher, they found it expedient to stem it by passing this act; but took care at the same time to stem another torrent, which they had experienced to be far more impetuous; by the introduction of the sacramental test: and as they had often before attempted in vain to screen the catholics from the severity of the penal statutes, by relaxing them in favour of the other dissenters; so now they were resolved to strike at the dissenters through the sides of the catholics.

“ But (says the writer of the *Case*) so far
 “ were the protestant dissenters from being
 “ aimed at in this bill, that, in their zeal to
 “ rescue the nation from the dangers which
 “ were at that time apprehended from popish

“ recusants, they contributed to the passing
 “ of the bill ; willingly subjecting them-
 “ selves to the disabilities created by it, rather
 “ than obstruct what was deemed so neces-
 “ sary to the common welfare.”

Generous dissenters ! But still they understood, at the very time, that they were included in that disqualifying bill, and that thereby they “ were subjected to disabilities ;” although rather than see the vessel of the state overwhelmed by popery, they tamely allowed themselves to be thrown out, like another Jonah, for the sake of the common weal ! Let him who can believe this, believe it. For my part, I believe that the dissenting members in that parliament saw well, that the bill would pass into an act without their concurrence ; and therefore they made a virtue of necessity, and raised, as they have often done, and now endeavour to do, their own *merit* on the pretended

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ed *demerit* of others. For without any view or wish to obstruct the indulgence of parliament to *protestant dissenters*, or without the least intention of representing them as dangerous subjects; I will take upon me to affirm, that, from the first establishment of the English church to the present day, she has had more to fear from protestant dissenters than from popish recusants. I do not even except the short reign of that infatuated bigot James the Second. His measures were too ouvert, too violent and too ridiculous, not to end in the ruin of himself and party; and instead of subverting the national religion, could only give new strength to it: while the secret machinations of the very numerous presbyterian faction have been, for more than a century, insensibly sapping its foundations; and will, most probably, in the end overthrow the whole fabric. The mine, as Dr. Priestley calls

calls it, has been long laying, not only "grain by grain," but barrel by barrel; and although perhaps it will not, for some time yet, be ready for springing, the work, I suspect, is much further advanced, than it is generally believed.

As a mere individual, I am little concerned about the event. Whether any civil establishment be conducive to the interests of religion, is still to me an undecided problem; and the arguments against it are at least fully as plausible and conclusive as those for it.—Certainly much more conform to the genuine spirit of "a kingdom which is not of this world." But that has nothing to do with the present question, which is merely, whether the present English establishment has more to fear from papists than from protestant dissenters? And for the resolution of this question I will venture to appeal, not only

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to all the bench of bishops and their adherents, but to every candid and well-informed dissenter in the nation.

But to return to the test-act. Nothing can be juster than what is said of it by Ralph : “ It was calculated not only to throw
 “ all papists out of office ; but to concenter
 “ all employments in those who professed
 “ the established religion.”*

It is true, indeed, that the dissenters, by their approbation of the test-act in as far as it regarded papists, hoped for some future mitigation of it in favour of themselves. In fact, in that same session, as is stated in the *Case*, a bill was brought into the house of commons for the special purpose of easing protestant dissenters, which had passed both houses, with some amendments ; but was lost by the sudden adjournment of

* Ralph, p. 223.

parliament. But does this bill import, that the dissenters were not meant to be included in the test-act? No, nor does it hold forth to them any relief from the onerous clause now complained of. If passed, it would have freed them from some pains and penalties (on condition of their subscribing to the thirty-nine articles), but would have admitted them to no office, from which either the test or corporation act excludes them.*

But nothing shews more evidently that these acts were ever considered as designed to include protestant dissenters, than the ineffectual efforts made at the revolution to have them repealed. Yet even William himself would never consent to that. The

* Another very strong proof that the test-act was meant to include dissenters, is, that in the parliament of 1675, when a new bill was drawn up against the papists, there is not a word in it to relieve protestant dissenters.

toleration act only protected them from the severity of penal statutes, and gave them leave to appoint deputies to serve in certain parochial and ward offices, if they should not think it fit to qualify themselves for them ; and this even is clogged with a *proviso*, that the person deputed be approved by those who would have approved the principal, if not otherwise unqualified.

In the subsequent reign, the cord was rather tightened than relaxed. As many of the dissenting party had been charged with occasional conformity, an act was passed in 1711, requiring all persons who held offices not only to receive the sacrament according to the rite of the church of England ; but to conform to her whole mode of worship during the time of holding them.

Some acts passed in the reigns of George the First and Second have explained and
amended

amended some parts of the test and corporation acts, and limited their operations; but it is not asserted by the dissenters themselves, that there was ever an intention of repealing them: nay, some of the amendments are such as seem rather calculated to give them new strength; particularly those of the sixteenth of George the Second. Nor in the present reign, has there been any thing done to amend those amendments; nor any attempt made towards having the original acts repealed until now. Pity! it should be at length made in so objectionable a form.

For, in the *Case of the Protestant Dissenters*, there is not only an evident mis-statement of facts, of which there was no need for the proper enforcement of their just claim; but there is, moreover, a disgusting illiberality of sentiment unworthy of this enlightened and tolerant age.

For, in the first place, the indulgence requested would only go to relieve a part of protestant dissenters from a grievance which many protestant dissenters find a very small one, and which the almost annual acts of indemnity render no grievance at all; while there are penal and even bloody statutes remaining against a considerable part of their protestant brethren, for whom no relief is asked in this case. Not to mention that occasional conformity has not only been very generally practised by protestant dissenters, but has the approbation of some of their most eminent divines, and even of whole assemblies.*

The present application of protestant dis-

* In fact, are not our parliament, our armies, our navies, our corporations even, filled with protestant dissenters? who either make no scruple to qualify themselves by the sacramental test; or are brought to no inconvenience from neglecting it. In some instances they may avail themselves of it to avoid penalties, which their fellow subjects are liable to—witness the case of Mr. Evans, in 1757.

senters,

ponents, then, being a pitiful and partial application, for what is hardly worth soliciting for, and what they already in some measure possess, will probably meet with little regard from any part of the legislature for that very reason. The sticklers for establishment will consider it as the effect of a restless and turbulent disposition, that is never contented; and the real friends of religious freedom, and universal toleration, must look upon it as a silly endeavour to remove a mole-hill, whilst mountains remain untouched.

That you, Sir, are one of those who will view things in this light I cannot doubt; and that their number, in both houses, is neither small nor weightless. Is there not therefore ground to presume that some of those, instead of supporting only a paltry motion, calculated to remedy so small a negative inconvenience, will take occasion to

move for a general repeal of a number of penal statutes inflicting great and positive evils, under which many thousands of faithful subjects, and good citizens, continue to groan, and which are, in the eyes of all Europe, a disgrace to our penal code?

It may be urged that those oppressive and sanguinary laws are a mere *dead letter* ; but if so, let them be decently *interred*, and no longer remain a public nuisance, to reflect dishonour on the polity of a civilized nation, and expose it to the scorn of mankind. If the penal statutes are in their own nature so severe and odious, that they can never be put in execution (which some of them certainly are), to what purpose is it then to retain them? If they be deemed necessary for the conservation of the state, let them be punctually enforced ; if they be not necessary, let them be annulled. There is
here

here no medium ; they must stand in our statute book, either for the national *safety* or *shame* !

But is it true that they are all a *dead letter* ? Quite the contrary ; there is a whole body of dissenting lieges, on whom some of them still operate as directly and effectually as ever ; and others, which though only of the disabling kind, are in their consequences equal to a penalty, and severe beyond example. If the other dissenters may be said to be “ chastised with whips,” this class of them is certainly “ chastised with “ scorpions ;” and while the former complain of being overloaded with the “ little “ finger” of government, the latter have long patiently borne the pressure of its “ loins.”

You readily conceive, sir, that I mean the English catholics, a body not numerous indeed,

indeed, but confessedly respectable; and as firmly attached to the present government, and the constitution of their country, as any of his Majesty's subjects. And here again the writers of the *Case* of the dissenters are blameable for the idle and impertinent insinuations thrown out against what they term *popery* and *papists*; terms that have been too often employed to work upon the minds of the people, and inspire them with horror at their fellow-creatures, by imputing to them tenets which they expressly disavow, and practices which they disclaim and abjure.

Some of their tenets may be deemed absurd, some of their practices superstitious *,
but

* Even in these respects, the catholics of the present day, and particularly the English catholics, are certainly not the same they were but half a century ago. The small, the very small indulgence that has been granted to them, has already produced a considerable revolution in
their

but neither are incompatible with any one species of government. The supremacy of the Roman Pontiff is the only thing in their doctrine, that has the appearance of political danger : and to be sure it was once a dangerous doctrine, from the unwarrantable conclusions that were drawn from it, and the pernicious consequences that ensued. The sentence of an infallible judge was a tremendous sentence, and the thunders of the Vatican shook the firmest thrones in Christendom. But what was it, that first gave infallibility to the decisions of a Pope ?—What rendered his thunders formidable ? The lawless ambition, the pious folly, or the slavish weakness of temporal princes, who, to serve their own immediate purposes, or to satisfy their

their minds. Since they began to taste a small portion of British liberty, they think, they speak, they write like Britons. If we wish to see further reforms among them, let them quaff it in full draughts ; and I mistake it much, if that will not more effectually bring about the purpose, than penalties and proscription.

ill-placed devotion, concurred to aggrandize the Roman see, until it gradually became the seat of universal empire, and its bishop the sovereign arbiter of nations. In vain the clergy murmured and remonstrated against the invasion on their rights; papal usurpation, supported by regal power, bore every thing down before it. The institution of religious orders contributed not a little to support the pope's pretensions. The little learning that existed, existed in the monasteries; and it was employed to assert and extend the supposed prerogatives of the Roman see; on which, despising all ordinary jurisdiction, they immediately depended.

Thus was the papal power, in times of general ignorance, screwed up to the most enormous pitch; when, like every other overgrown empire, it began to labour under its own weight, has fallen much faster than it
rose,

rose, and is at present nearly reduced to its pristine narrow limits. The odious doctrine of deposing power, transferring crowns, and dispensing with oaths, has been long exploded in every catholic university.—Even bulls, that regard matters purely spiritual, have no force unless they be accepted by the national church, to which they are directed. Provincial synods, metropolitans, nay, simple bishops, take upon them to regulate the discipline of their respective districts, under the protection of the civil powers ; and a few years more will probably bring the form of the catholic hierarchy back to that of the first centuries.

At any rate, there is no longer danger to civil government from papal power. The present bishop of Rome is, in that respect, as harmless a personage as the man in the moon, and the supremacy which the English catholics allow to Pius VI. is not more dangerous

gerous to the constitution, than the primacy of his grace of Canterbury.

I have dwelt the longer on this subject, because I every day meet with, in occasional or periodical publications, the most ridiculous and unfair representations of the present state of the catholic religion, and particularly of the English catholics. Sometimes we are confidently told, that they already enjoy more liberty than some protestant dissenters: and that the commercial treaty with France will set them completely on a level with the other subjects of the realm *.

* Nothing can be more ill-founded than this idea. By an article of the treaty, the catholic subjects of France are to have the free exercise of their religion in England, in the same degree that the protestant subjects of England are to have the exercise of their religion in France: but what relief does that give to the English catholics, or to the French calvinists? who, by the bye, have had many indulgencies granted them, which the former enjoy not.

If

If such assertions be made through ignorance, it is a very gross ignorance, and if they be the fruit of malevolence, it is a very grievous one. But let us see what real indulgence the papists have obtained.

By an act of the eighteenth of his present Majesty, in 1779, the catholics of England, on their taking an oath prescribed to them by the legislature, obtained security for their lawful property, and a sort of tacit permission to believe and pray after their own fashion, without being molested by informers and priest-catchers : though, strange to tell, they may still, through the force of standing laws, be fined again and again, not only for the exercise of their own religion, but for the non-exercise of the established religion : they may, in some cases, be imprisoned, in others banished ; and I am not sure, but in certain circumstances, they may yet be “ persecuted unto the death.”

It is true these penalties are not likely to be inflicted ; and therefore I have only mentioned them to shew that they may ; and consequently, how little the Roman catholics have obtained by the late act in their favour : while, at the same time, they remain effectually excluded not only from all such offices, as the protestant dissenters are nominally, not really, excluded from, * the
army,

* This is allowed by the dissenters themselves. *The test-acts do not in fact exclude them from offices. Very few scruple to receive the sacrament ; several of the most respectable corporations are in their hands (see the Right of Protestant Dissenters asserted, . p. 146) ; while it is certain that the papists have not, nor cannot avail themselves of this expedient to qualify. It is, indeed, astonishing that the Case of the dissenters should insinuate, and the writer of the just-mentioned pamphlet affirm, that many catholics have no scruple to receive the sacrament according to the established rite. Let him point out a single papist in the kingdom that holds any office by occasional conformity ; since, as to what the same writer says, p. 148 (by way of a postil to the Case I suppose), about papal dispensations destroying the efficacy of every test by which papists are to be excluded, it is unjust and injurious in the highest degree. The English catholics have in the*
5 most

army, the navy, and the magistracy: but have not, though burthened with double taxes, a vote even in the election of their legislative representatives, much less can they be themselves elected, or take the seat due to their rank in either house of parliament. From the very bar, and courts of law, they are excluded. The public seminaries of learning are also shut up from them. They have neither the means of improving their talents, nor an opportunity of exerting them. Useless to themselves, and

most solemn manner abjured all such dispensations; but had they never done so, it is evident, from their conduct, that they make no account of them; for, if a papal dispensation could serve their turn, why need they be excluded from any place at all? What hinders them to defeat by that expedient, not only the sacramental test, but every other test that deprives them of any right which a Briton is born to enjoy? The quotation from the bishop of Cloyne's pamphlet is not fair: The transaction alluded to by the bishop, is greatly in favour of the Irish catholics: They reprobated the conduct of the papal *Nuncio*, despised his threats, and continue, with the acquiescence of Rome itself, to think themselves strictly and indispensably bound by their oaths.

useless to the common weal, they are, if they have any spirit, obliged to seek abroad what they cannot find at home—some employment suitable to their disposition, birth, and abilities, or pass their lives in a state of torpidity and inaction, that, but for some little domestic pursuits, would render life itself a burthen.

Such, Sir, you know to be the situation of the Roman catholics of England ; a situation truly pitiable, and of which the hardships are hardly to be conceived but by those who feel them. Would it not, then, have been more generous, and more just, for the protestant dissenters to have come forward on this occasion with a little more candour and a little more manliness * ? to have made their

* Of all the pamphlets that have been written on this occasion, either in favour of the dissenters or against them, I have not seen one in which there is not an astonishing want of candour and liberality, Dr. Priestley's Letter to Mr. Pitt excepted,

petition to parliament as comprehensive as possible? and to have endeavoured to open so wide a door of toleration as to admit their fellow dissenters, of whatever persuasion, to go in along with them? or, if they selfishly chose to go in alone, it surely did not become them to throw such stumbling-blocks in the way of their suffering brethren. The name of Christian is a much more ancient and more honourable, as well as a more comprehensive tie, than that of protestant; and there is a tie still more ancient and comprehensive than either—that of humanity. The time, I trust, is not at a great distance, when the full force of this last will be understood and felt over all the polished nations of the world, when philanthropy and commutual interests will be the sole links of society, when tests and penal laws will be no more deemed necessary for the security of religion, and when Papist and Protestant, Athanasian and Arian,

Lutheran and Calvinist, Trinitarian and Unitarian, will be names of mere distinction, not of reciprocal odium, and much less objects of reciprocal persecution.

And have we not reason to hope, Sir, that the British legislature will be among the first to bring about a system so desirable, and so congenial to the British constitution? God knows we have, and ever shall have, political disputes enough to divide us: why should those of religion come in for a share? Let some patriotic and enlightened soul, then, move at once for a repeal of every penal religious statute, and every religious test: Be the pledge of the fidelity of the subject in future, his ordinary oath of allegiance, and his subsequent conduct, and let him be answerable only for his own; let religious principles be no more confounded with political ones; but let every Briton, without forfeiting his birth-right, profess

his own belief of the Divinity, and worship him after his own mode ; and if he chooses not to worship at all, what is that to the state, if he faithfully serve it in the station he holds, or the charge he is intrusted with? In a word, let the only test of a good citizen be an obligation, to be a *peaceable subject* and an *honest man*.

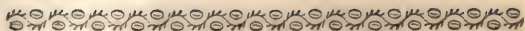
Such a motion, Sir, would do infinite honour to the mover ; would be seconded and supported by every man whose heart were not callous to the feelings of humanity ; and would immortalize the sovereign and the minister, in whose reign and under whose auspices, it should be adopted, and passed into a law.

I have the honour to be, &c.









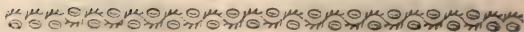
AN

E S S A Y

ON

SUNDAY SCHOOLS, &c.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]



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A N
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ON THE

DEPRAVITY OF THE NATION,
WITH A VIEW TO THE
PROMOTION OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS, &c.

OF WHICH

A MORE EXTENDED PLAN
IS PROPOSED.

By the Rev. JOSEPH BERINGTON.

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E S S A Y, &c.

IN viewing the decline and fall of States, in ancient, or in modern, times, it is to the corruption of manners in the people, that the politician, as well as the moralist, has principally ascribed the melancholy event. And as that cause is in itself sufficient, why were others to be looked for? The steps by which nations, from the most contemptible beginnings, rose to greatness and renown, were severity of discipline, and the rigid practice of private and public virtue. Let these agents cease, and the effect must cease with them. Prosperity will be followed by misfortunes, and glory by disgrace. The annals of every fallen nation attest the truth of the observation. But examples are unnecessary to prove it: in the very nature of things it must be so.

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The dependence between those parts of man, which are called soul and body, is so reciprocal, that their respective affections are mutually communicated and mutually felt. In a state of bodily enervation the mind is enervated, and a general languor seizes the whole man. See him when his nerves are braced, and his pulse beats high; he is become active, bold and enterprising. Every vice tends to debilitate the individual, whom it has subdued; because every vicious indulgence is attended by some excess, and all excess weakens. The vicious man then is a being without energy; at least, he will soon become such. The effect I speak of, is natural. The toughest bow when too much bent will break. Providence, in great goodness, has so constructed the human frame, that what can injure the moral character shall not be committed, even with present impunity. The libertine, reclined on his couch, preaches morality by his languid countenance, and is compelled to own, that he has violated the sacred order of things.

The passions (if the human affections ever acquire that name till excess has vitiated their character) while properly tempered by reason, are the source of every great and manly exertion. Loosened from that controul, no torrent is more impetuous or destructive. They disorder, by their violence, the nervous system in all its branches; they break
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afunder every regular affociation of ideas ; and with this confufion they introduce anarchy in its worft form. A man, under the influence of many, or of a fingle paffion, if he be not in himfelf miserable, will be dangerous at leaft to his fellow-citizens : and that fame impulfe which, for a time, may feem to be the fpring of health and happinefs, if long indulged, will finally break down his frame, and reduce him to a mafs of ruins. Nothing fo gentle as the vernal breeze, which animates and gives ftrength to the powers of nature ; but when noxious vapours or contrary blafits have difturbed its even current, it riles to a ftorm, and devaftation and ravage mark its courfe.

Such, in a general view, are on the individual the obvious and phyfical effects of vicious indulgence and lawlefs paffion. There are other effects. Private virtue there can be none, where the character is totally vitiated ; and where the evil is but partial, fometimes fo deftructive are its qualities, that it deranges the fyftem, and generates an inaptitude to all that is good and honourable. I fpeak, it is obvious, of habitual derangements and fixed characters. But where the commiffion of vice is incidental and uncontinued, its operations are proportionably deftructive. Virtue can only result from order and a confiftent tenour of thought and action. This order and this confiftency are broken

in upon whenever discordant sensations are excited: and as these are repeated or prolonged, new associations are formed of a character abhorrent from the former, and the general system of affections ceases to be equipoised. The smallest element of infection taken into the vital stream, makes its way imperceptibly; it vitiates as it goes, and finally seizes on the essential sources of life.

I would not be understood to say, that there can be no virtue where there are vicious practices, because I know, the stream may be sometimes troubled, while the fountain, from which it flows, remains clear and tranquil. Every bad action does not reach the heart. But in some degree or other, at every deviation from moral rectitude, the effects, I have described, are sure to take place. The laws which regulate the operations of man are as certainly determined, though under them he is free, as those by which are governed the common systems of matter.

If man, individually taken, be so deranged by vice, as to become a being in which no harmony of parts, no order of ideas, no consistency of character can reside; what judgment may we form of a society, all the members of which, or by far the major part, are unfortunately so constituted? It will be an aggregate, held together by no internal

ternal tie, while a principle of destruction, fermenting within, threatens at every moment its destruction. The evils which we saw in the individual now apply to the community; for the community can possess nothing but what its component parts contributed. Finding no security within, we must look to some external cause, the influence of which may serve as a bond of union.

Interest then, which must ever sway the human breast, or force, applied through the medium of laws or other coercive means, may perhaps supply every advantage, which private virtue, in its most exalted forms, could have given. There is an illusion in this supposition, which often not reason, but the melancholy truth of facts, has alone been able to dissipate. I know that a society can subsist, as long as it is the interest of its members that it should prosper; that is, as long as such interest is felt and is paramount to every other. But when the general good happens to clash with the selfish principle, or to be contrary to it, which think you, will preponderate, in the absence of virtue to turn the scale? Private interest is too powerful an agent, and dwells too near to the individual, to be sacrificed to any consideration, however great or alluring, which is not coincident with itself. I am indigent, and the property of my neighbour falls under my hand: shall the reflection, that the good

of the community forbids the act, withhold its grasp?

Sensible that no principle, however selfish, was strong enough to coerce the arm of vice, and to preserve society from ruin, the founders of States had recourse to laws. These, they well saw, by the penalties they would inflict on the refractory, would at least, and for a time, stem the torrent, though its thousand streams would ever flow, and baffle all opposition. But the very act of legislation announces, how desperate the evil is, which calls for a remedy so adverse to the dearest principles of our being. Laws abridge our liberty: but this we can devote, that life and property may be guarded. Yet are these laws themselves but an imperfect barrier. They can reach, indeed, the more flagrant criminal; while the needy pilferer and the dark assassin, the perjured villain and the venal statesman, in security work their way, unawed by justice, and triumph in their guilt.

But we have heard of public virtue; of patriots, whom private benevolence never moved, and of statesmen only honest in their country's cause. These men, it is said, would bring a remedy to every evil; they would give stability, by their counsels, to the general weal; and opposing, by timely interference, the machinations of domestic enemies, and the attacks of public foes, would take
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care that the republic received no injury. Till the Palladium, say they, by the crafty Ulysses, was stolen from the walls of Troy, the city, though by the Gods devoted to destruction, proudly withstood the efforts of its numerous assailants. The men, I allude to, are the palladium of the State, which they are sent to govern.

In this argument there is also much illusion.— I believe such virtue may exist, (though, in truth, it merits not the name) as long as it continues the interest of such men to wear the gaudy semblance, or the ruling passion can thereby be more efficaciously served. Other tie there can be none. Change the order of things. Withdraw the statesman from the helm of business, and take the truncheon from the general's hand. You have, at once, dissipated their patriotism, and silenced all solicitude for the state. It will be well, if you have not rendered them its most determined foes. In fact, what is all public virtue, if it be real, but the internal principle of rectitude, moving in a larger sphere, than when it fed the hungry at the gate, and guarded from oppression the widow and the orphan? It is then evident, that from this quarter can be drawn but a temporary and uncertain support. Troy fell, you say, when the statue of Minerva was purloined. How soon also may not the boasted protection of these guardians cease to operate? Too easy is
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the transition from apparent virtue to real vice ; and they have proved the greatest tyrants, who once affected to be called their country's friends.

In spite then of the operation of laws, for all nations have had them ; in spite of heroes, patriots, and statesmen ; and in spite of every substitute, to which human policy has recurred, to supply the place of real virtue ; societies have been dissolved, and kingdoms have fallen. The fact evinces that the means were hollow and inefficacious. But is the event ascribable to no other cause ? Clearly it is not. In tracing the rise of nations, we see by what steps they mounted. They are marked in the stern virtue of the leaders, and in the prompt, but manly, submission of the multitude. While this endured, the land smiled in strength and happiness. But when power had introduced wealth, and wealth luxury, and luxury excess of every kind, then begins the decline. In proportion to their virtue has been the prosperity of States, and misfortunes have regularly pursued the spread of vicious depravity. View the Roman republic emerging from obscurity, and growing into manhood. The same will be the survey of ancient Greece. This virtue could effect. And in the fall of the Western and Eastern empires may be traced the baneful hand of vice. The incursions of foreign invaders aided, I know, the ravages of this internal monster. But
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what had roused the hopes, and given an energy unfelt before, to the barbarous hordes, that pressed forwards on every side? It was the lust of plunder; but more than that, it was the enfeebled trunk of empire, become an object of their scorn.

Similar effects must ever result from similar causes. The dagger which could pierce a Roman breast, would lay you or me in the dust. Modern kingdoms must therefore fall, as others have done, if the same seeds of destruction are preparing their ruin. They are. With pain I look to England. Every symptom, which the most accurate historians described, as preceding the dissolution of Rome, I see furrowed on her countenance.

In the higher orders of the State reigned a spirit of extravagant profusion, to gratify cravings of which, when honourable means could not suffice, they descended to the basest. In fortune they became bankrupts and in fame. The religion of their country they ridiculed, and virtuous honesty was a term of reproach. They discarded the habits of manhood, and he was the truest Roman who could be foremost in effeminacy, in revelry, and in impudence. Decency was prudery, the love of order was low vulgarity, and œconomy was avarice. The same passions were found at the head of armies and in the senate; they disgraced the
statesman,

statesman, and they rendered vile the distributors of public justice and the guardians of the laws.—The ministers of the gods and the philosophers had received the common taint. The latter vainly emulous of superior wisdom, rejected, as idle prejudice, the common tenets of reason, and weakened the moral duties by specious theories. The former, rendered no longer venerable by the sacred character, which they had dared to pollute, mixed with the gay and the voluptuous, in the quest of pleasure and the emoluments of office. The people despised them. In return they became more haughty, and more exacting. Whom they could no longer cajole, they insulted, and they drove them from the altars of the gods.—The virtues of domestic life, which had once been their fairest ornament, in the household cares and the occupations of retirement, now could not fill the attention of the Roman ladies. They loved to meet the admiring eye, to hear the voice of flattery, and to stand foremost in the theatres, and the public games. In this change of manners the genuine character of the sex was no longer discernible; and it became a doubt, whether more than the mere appearance of female virtue was left in Rome.—The contagion had descended. In the lower ranks were prodigality, insolence, and profaneness. There was want of honour, want of honesty, want of subordination, want of reverence for the laws and for
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the gods. The foldier was debauched and enervated; the artizan only laboured that he might dissipate; and the peasant, leaning on his spade, dared to sneer at holy things, and to ridicule the simplicity of the maid whom his promises had seduced.

Such were the great features of vice and degeneracy, which had foully marked the Roman name, before the republic was enslaved, and they did but spread, and grow more gigantic, till the empire was overwhelmed, and sunk for ever. The application to England can be easily made; though in each particular it will not exactly tally. It is well. I fear, however, the difference only lies in this, that Rome fell, and we are falling. In her the poison had reached the heart: It is moving in our veins.

“ 'Tis therefore, many whose sequester'd lot
Forbids their interference, looking on,
Anticipate perforce some dire event;
And seeing the old castle of the State,
That promised once more firmness, so assail'd
That all its tempest-beaten turrets shake,
Stand motionless expectants of its fall.

COWPER.

I shall be told that moralists, preachers, and poets, and calculators as wild and gloomy as they, have, from the beginning of time, held this melancholy lan-

language; but that the events never answered to their predictions.—Have not then those kingdoms fallen, which I mentioned; and was not their fall foreseen. Men, I own, are often sanguine, and their imaginations anticipate events, the causes of which however are too palpable. In these views, there is by many a gloomy pleasure found, on which the mind rests, while every act of attention gives new colouring to the swelling scene. But when data are given, on which reason works, and the conclusions are deduced from analogy, then is the process sure, and the inference unhazarded. Moral causes, I before observed, work their effects, with infallible precision; but as their mode of operation is hidden from the sight, and they seem to be checked, in their progress, by the capricious passions of mortals, which know no certain channel, it is thought they cannot be measured by any fixed canons of calculation. The man, however, who has been familiar with himself, and who has watched the workings of his own heart and head, will have discovered that the ebbs and flows there are more regular and determined, than he before suspected. What is, in this respect, true, applies to the great system of moral causes, on which the rise and fall of nations are known to depend. If it be certain that, from laws wisely planned, and cheerfully obeyed, will arise order in the people, and from order happiness; so will anarchy produce

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confusion, and confusion misery. The genial warmth of the sun does not more certainly promote, and the nipping frosts of March check the progress of vegetation.

Much is said of the civil constitution of Britain, so justly poised, and so firmly knitted together, that it can counteract these intestine evils, and triumph over a combination of causes, which have ruined other states. It is the majestic oak, which, nor the howling tempest, nor the canker at heart, shall move from the solid basis on which it stands. —An old Latin adage says, *corruptio optimi pessima*, that is, the more perfect the subject, the more dreadful is its state, when the gangrene has vitiated the mass. This equipoise in our constitution as it is productive of much good, so eventually may it be the occasion of our ruin. The smallest additional weight, not duly distributed, destroys the equilibrium. When prerogative preponderates, the liberty of the people suffers; and when the balance inclines to the people, licentiousness prevails, and the state is threatened with dissolution. While the views of ministers are directed to the general weal, and the people are satisfied, no form of government can be better adapted to produce the greatest good. In the opposition of parties, and the conflict of interests, civil commotions ensue, and the jealousy of power, which each one feels,

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rouses him to precipitancy and to arms. In this state of things, a bold leader dissolves the constitution. When luxury has unnerved the arm, and security from foreign enemies has lulled the proud spirit of the nation, then may an ambitious monarch buy the voices of the indigent, seize the reins, and become the tyrant of his people. As this has been the fate of other free states; so probably it will be ours. Before the strong man falls, disease must have wasted his vigour, or the dagger pierced his veins.

But do not the exertions, we lately made, (exertions which, before the eyes of Europe, have placed England in a new point of elevation) evince that no sources are exhausted; that we are still strong in the vigour of manhood, and in the energy, at least, of public virtue.—The exertions certainly were great, and the spirit which led them forward was manly. But when a nation becomes incapable of these efforts, it is already fallen. The symptoms I described, are the companions of its decline. Thanks also to the youth, who with an Herculean arm, conducts the vast machine of empire! He is a proof of my position, that the mind, unclouded by passion, and the body, unenfeebled by vicious indulgence, are transcendently adapted to the double purpose of design and execution. The night he has not spent in revellings, nor the day in sauntering indolence. Unsolicited by the cravings
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of profusion, he has not her calls to gratify. His interest is his country's interest, and to promote her glory is his first ambition.—*Serus in cælum redeas !*

To speak of the probable event of the national debt comes not within the limits of this essay. It has afforded ample matter to the lucubrations of calculators and state-empirics. The evil, however, in every view, is seriously alarming.

The wealth of England and its power have, surely, been promoted by its commerce with other nations, and by its manufactures at home: But they also have been the sources of many evils; and our present depravity of manners takes its principal strength from them.—With the products of other climes are imported their peculiar vices. Besides, it is the effect of trade, tying down the mind to its own pursuits, to circumscribe its faculties, to weaken its sensibilities, and to render it familiar with all the arts, by which wealth may be acquired and retained.—The towns where manufactures are established, are seminaries of vice. The contagion reaches to the peasant, and infects the villages. They may give us many soldiers; but do they give sinews and the bone of men?

Before the love of gain had extended commerce,
and luxury had quickened the loom and the anvil,
England

England was less rich; but had we fewer honest citizens, and fewer patriots? Indeed, were we less populous? The country is drained of its inhabitants to supply the losses, which disease, contracted from a thousand causes, never fails to make in the crowded cities. The country, after all, is the only nursery, where strong bodies and sound minds are bred. Were our barren wastes inclosed, and the plough permitted to break their useless sod; we should see the wondrous productions of Deucalion and Pyrrha realized before our eyes. Men and women would spring up where rocks and barrenness had before dwelt. I would rather see agriculture extended, than cities built. The event even would compensate for the loss of empire. It would do more. The empire we have lost would be re-produced at home; and were India severed from us as America has been, in our own fields we should find all its boasted riches.

In viewing the crimes of nations, which seem to forebode their fall, the moralist cannot stop at secondary causes. He knows there is a Providence above, which watches over, and conducts, the affairs of men. Even sometimes does he seem to see the fingers writing upon the wall, and without the spirit of divination, he can interpret the awful scroll. If God, for their sins, has visited other nations in his wrath, will he for ever bear with ours?

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In the great system of the universe it matters little, whether kingdoms rise or fall. As one bubble bursts, another forms. But to us whose views are circumscribed, and who are actors on the scene, it is not quite so indifferent. The patriot then, as far as means are within his reach, will strive to avert the evil hour; while the moralist, deploring the loss of virtue in his fellow citizens, will, on his side, labour to apply a remedy to the disease. Though the decrees of heaven are irreversible; yet are they, it is presumed, sometimes conditional, their completion depending on the interference of secondary causes. Among these the moral agent, man, stands foremost. Motives for despondency there are none, while time flows on, and every thing seems to call us into action. The torrent perhaps can yet be stemmed, which threatens our ruin. To do it with more effect, we must see where its source lies, and what are the causes which principally swell its current. The national depravity is great, and all ranks are infected. I will consider the lower orders of society.

If instruction be so necessary, that, without it, man is little superior to the beast which tills his field, how forlorn will be their condition, who are utterly deprived of it! I speak of that instruction which is adapted to station, that which is barely calculated to open the mind to the impressions of

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duty,

duty, and to shew what that duty is. God is our father, and we are his children. This is the first relation in which we stand. We are members of society, and of this society various are the orders. Hence proceeds the second relation. On these two relations are grounded all the duties of religion and morality. In point of religion, we have all the same obligations; because God is the common father of all. As members of society, our situations in life are different; hence different are our duties. The magistrate has his duties; so has the common citizen, so has the parent, and so has the child. It is the design then of instruction to lay open these respective duties, and to press their compliance on the mind. However obvious they may seem, it is only by instruction they can be conveyed. Human nature is not self-taught. And so indolently stupid is the untutored mind, that, without instigation, it will neither look for, nor will it find, what is so necessary to the common improvement of its character. Without this improvement, I have said, what man is; but I have not said all that, as society is now constituted, he soon will be. Ignorant of his duties, they can have no call on him; but his passions, headstrong and unopposed, will bear him into vice, and the example of others will complete his ruin. The punishments, with which the laws threaten the perpetrators of
certain

certain crimes, will be a check to them; comparatively, however, these are but few.

That the instruction, I speak of, has been long neglected, needs no proof. It is marked on the manners of the people. Generations have passed without it. Will, or can, the parent therefore, who has himself learned nothing, and whose habits are bad, instruct his offspring, and tutour them to virtue? The son will walk in his father's ways.—Here lies the source of the evil.

Friends to human nature and to virtue, seeing the general spread of viciousness, and deploring it, have, with becoming fortitude, addressed the public, and implored aid against the enemy. They have offered schemes of reformation, in *police bills*, *penitentiary bills*, *poor bills*, and *prison bills*. Had their patriotic views been seconded, in the fullest extent, the root of the evil remained vigorous and untouched. They only aimed at the branches of the disorder.—So to regulate the internal œconomy of the great cities, that the persons and property of the inhabitants should be protected from depredation and insult, and that indecency should not openly walk the streets, was an object of great moment. It has not, however, been effected.—It was important to build houses, wherein they who had merited public chastisement, should be con-

fined to hard labour. This is in execution.—The number of poor being exorbitant, and the consequent burthens on the people intolerable, it became necessary to oppose the growing grievance. Poor bills have been multiplied, and a scheme of great complication is now before the public.—The regulation also of prisons, it must be owned, call for serious attention. The benevolent man, who, with an ardour unheard of before in the annals of human nature, has prosecuted the design, experiences, at this moment, the proudest favour which a nation can confer.

A royal *Proclamation* also has been issued, to enforce the execution of the laws, and to rouse the magistrates to their duty. The benevolence of His Majesty, and his love of virtue are announced in the measure, while it proclaims the extent and enormity of the evil. It may give some temporary or local relief. Its insufficiency has been often experienced.

These schemes, I said, do not reach the root of the disorder. It is my duty to prove it.—Could a plan be devised that should, at once, take off all the full-blown crimes which infest society, but very little of the general evil would be removed. The mass would remain vitiated in the rising generation, and, like the Hydra, would soon push out heads, monstrous

monstrous and devouring as the first. What are the crimes which are aimed to be suppressed? Only such as are most flagrant. To speak more properly, the design is not so much to hinder the commission of crimes, as to punish them, in the most effectual manner, when committed. It is also proposed to reform the lives of these profligates, and to take care that they do not return on the community more vicious than when they entered their prison-house. To reform such characters is, I believe, impossible. Fear and hard labour may induce them to counterfeit; but they cannot give virtuous propensities, or virtuous habits. Nor will instruction be then able to effect it.

Were the depravity of the nation so partial as these gentlemen seem to suppose, it might doubtless be eradicated by their endeavours. It would be principally confined to those whom public justice can attach. But so, assuredly, it is not; nor does it lie so near to the surface. It is still the wish of every honest man, that success may attend all attempts to disperse the evil. Every mode of attack is praise-worthy, and may do something. Only let not too sanguine hopes be formed, or too great reliance be made on means, which, at best, can but retrench the more luxuriant shoots, or apply palliatives, while the disease rankling at the core, remains unaffected.

This was seen by a patriotic and virtuous citizen, to whom, it is my hope, the present generation will raise a monument of gratitude. Already he possesses one (and that, I think, will please him best) in the breasts of his fellow-subjects. I speak of Mr. RAIKES, of *Glocester*, who first proposed and realized the scheme of SUNDAY SCHOOLS. May I be indulged the romantic thought, that, should the memorial, I mentioned, be dedicated to his name, our children's children shall be taught to repeat his praises, and a festival shall be appointed in honour of the benevolent man! As the day annually returns, the aged parents, who reaped the blessings of his plan, shall lead their infants to the holy spot; with garlands they shall deck his monument; and in chorus they shall be heard to sing, "*He was our benefactor and his country's friend.*"

The institution of these schools I view with pleasure, and the happiest effects may be augured from them. They will give the instruction which I said was so necessary; will open the mind to religion and to virtue; will spread the principles of charity, of forbearance, and of mildness; will inspire the love of order, and of respect for the laws; in a word, they will dry up the sources of the torrent which seemed ready to overwhelm the nation. The expectation is not too sanguine. For if children be taken early to the schools, where it
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cannot be but good impressions must be made, they will grow up with the happy bias. The subordination in which their exercises must be performed, will habituate them to discipline. The Sunday they will learn to keep holy. If their parents, fortunately, should be induced to co-operate, then may themselves be in part reformed, and in their houses, during the week, will be strengthened, by good example and advice, the scheme of instruction which began in the schools. Perverse and obstinate, should they continue to neglect their children, still something will have been learned, which may serve to resist the influence of bad example. In our days should the good be but partial, we know that the next generation will experience more happy effects, in a succession of parents, on whose minds had been sown the seeds of early virtue. This alone will more than compensate every exertion.

Already these schools are become very general, and great good has been experienced from them. This is a full answer to all objections. It has been objected, that learning in the lower ranks of life is seldom of any use, and is sometimes hurtful.— Is religious instruction then of no avail? Or can instruction be effectually conveyed, where the ordinary talent of being able to read, has not been
first

first acquired? More than this is not necessary.—It has been objected, that all societies of Christians are careful to instil into their children the elements at least of religion, and that it is the duty of their respective ministers to attend to it. This being done, Sunday schools are unnecessary.—The existence of the evil we complain of shews too evidently, with what incaution the objection has been made. Blame I mean not to cast on any order of men, because it is my wish to conciliate, and not to irritate the minds of any. The evil exists; let us unite to repress it, for the cause is common.

When schemes are proposed, which seem to promise much advantage, they are often eagerly adopted; but in this eagerness we do not always consider what is the best method to ensure their success. Have the best methods been adopted in the present case? The subject merits attention.

Besides the leading object, which is to teach the first and most essential duties, there are other things combined with it, which should never be lost sight of. The promoters of the scheme had, I doubt not, this also in view. Indeed, so closely connected are all the parts of the moral system, that they necessarily introduce one another.

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From the liberty which the Reformation introduced into the Christian scheme, and which, in this country, our political habits have much contributed to strengthen, has proceeded that almost infinite variety which appears in religious opinions. Government, indeed, has judged it expedient to give its sanction only to one form of worship, and laws have been made for its stability.. This however can deprive no one of the right inherent in his conscience, of thinking for himself. How just soever in itself, and congenial with the spirit of Protestantism, this liberty of choice may be, it has proved the occasion of great animosity. Parties have sprung up in religion, as acrimonious and as intolerant as were ever known in politics and in civil strife. The spirit is surely contrary to the first principles of the religion, in which we all profess to believe, and its consequences have been severely felt. Religious animosity is of all affections the worst, for it seems to take the fastest hold of the mind, and to mix in the most distant concerns. In this country it has, more than once, been the cause of the greatest political evils. The monster dies away: let it be our endeavour to complete his fall.

I think the Sunday schools may be made to answer to this great design. Why then should it not be done? Hitherto it has not, and only partial
good

good has been obtained.—Where the members of the Church have established them, either the children of Dissenters have been excluded, or the rules of the institution served as an exclusion. They are compelled to attend the service, and to learn the catechism of the Church. This surely is unreasonable. The Dissenters, on their side, have not always been more liberal. The tendency of such arrangements is evident. Not only does it keep alive an opposition spirit among the leaders, but it also gives birth to it in the unsuspecting minds of the children. Party names are given, and prejudices are formed. Thus is animosity carried into the very scheme, which benevolence projected, and which has charity and the love of virtue for its support. So true is it, that the best-intentioned minds are then even, perhaps, the most open to sinister impressions, when religion, with its attendant sensibilities, seems to draw their purses and to direct their hands. And what is there, after all, in any man's particular tenets, able so to narrow the mind, that then only he should be low and circumscribed, when every rational motive seems to call for liberality and expansion of heart? Study human nature we may, but there ever will remain something inexplicable in its character. Could I presume, indeed, that some *interest*, visible or latent, acted on every occasion, an under-part, at least,

least, the problem would be solved. I am unwilling to suppose it, yet a cause there must be.

Let me then propose, that schools be opened on a more extended plan ; and that, in this business, we for once forget that we are Church of England-men, Presbyterians, Baptists, Roman Catholics, or Quakers. This is to ask much, I know ; but let the experiment be tried. Use will form us to it.

The plan I mean is this.—*Where schools are established, let children of all religions be invited to enter.* But then it will be necessary that elementary books of instruction be prepared, which shall contain nothing contrary to the peculiar tenets of any Christian society. It must be further agreed, that the children attend their respective places of worship, agreeable to the mode of faith in which they are bred. Such being the regulations, the masters will be instructed religiously to observe them, and the visitors, on honour, will comply with the same.

Where are the objections to such a scheme as this? The compiling of the books, or catechisms, will be an easy task. They must be elementary, but practical and comprehensive. When we have separated from each society its distinctive opinions, which are mostly speculative, will be left a great mass of Christian doctrine, and the whole system of
moral

moral duties. Of these we will form our new religious code; to which no one shall object, because he before professed it all, with the addition only of certain tenets.—The existence of God and his attributes, his providential care over us and over the world which he made; the rewards of virtue and the punishments of vice.—The divine mission of Jesus Christ, his life, his preaching, his death and resurrection, and his future coming to judge the world.—The ten commandments, and all the duties of life. The observation of the sabbath, with morning and evening prayer.—The scriptures, what, and by whom written: select passages from the old and new.—Obedience to the laws, and the punishments they inflict on certain crimes.—Here, surely, are materials, ample and important enough.

I said, the books should be *elementary*, that is, easy and familiar, adapted to the capacities of children. They shall begin with what is *most practical and intelligible, gradually opening to greater points as the understanding expands, and as progress is made. But I would dissuade from any thing that is technical or systematic, however plausible; for such methods, out of theory, have seldom been found to answer. The visible progress which children make is very slow. They seem to receive little more than words; however, notions
will

will gradually be associated with them. From often hearing of God, of duty, and of a future state, impressions will be mechanically made, and they will operate in due time. They will create a reverence for religion, and for its general dictates; and a foundation for the principle of conscience will be laid, that will always act as a check upon vice and immorality.

So far we have seen nothing either objectionable or impracticable. Let me now suppose a child, Catholic or Protestant, on whose mind have been made all the impressions of this plan, in its fullest extent. Will any principles or opinions be found there, which will not most aptly coalesce with any future structure of peculiar tenets, which it may please his parents or ministers to superinduce? Evidently not. But he will have learned every fundamental maxim of truth and virtue, which the most zealous and enlightened teacher could have been ambitious to instil. Nor does the plan exclude a concomitance, or even a priority, of instruction, if it should be the wish of any one to make his child a Protestant, for instance, before he has learned the principles of a Christian and a man. This shall be optional. Though my advice would be, that he should be neither so partial or so precipitate.

Now

Now let me see, whether we have not gained, with these treasures of moral instruction, the other grand point I mentioned, that is, in the minds which this plan has tutored, a privation of all religious animosity, and a fund of general benevolence and liberality? I am sure we have. Our elementary books have ever inculcated these virtues; they have never alluded to party-names, or discriminating opinions; but they have invariably said, that all mankind were brothers, and that it was their first duty to love one another. They spoke of dissensions, of quarrels, and of rancour as inimical to the spirit of Christianity, and as debasing to the heart of man. Their instructors, by word and conduct, were careful to strengthen the same impressions: while the sight of the visitors, men of different religious persuasions, but all co-operating in the same plan, would most effectually promote the important work. The last circumstance, in every point of view, is interesting. Here I only wish to mention, that as children are always much moved by the conduct of their superiors, the effect on their minds must be pleasing, when they begin to reflect, that they who from pure benevolence became their benefactors, were men of different persuasions.

Such is the plan I wish to see executed, and such must be its effects. It has every advantage which others

others possess; and it besides has many which they cannot pretend to. Why then should it not be attempted? If the man the most bigotted to his own tenets can say, it will obstruct their influence, or their spread, I am willing to resign it. I wish, however, to be understood, that by tenets I do not mean party prejudice, or a dislike of those who in opinion chuse to differ from us; for such dispositions, I do think, this scheme is calculated utterly to extirpate.

Some there still may be, whom an early predilection for their own books of instruction has so fascinated, that they will not easily be prevailed on to resign them, even in the partial manner I request. Have they ever maturely weighed their contents, and compared the methods they pursue, with the character and extent of the infant mind? I have before me some of the most popular catechisms.—That of the *Church* is concise and perspicuous enough to the instructed mind; but it has few words, and as few ideas, adapted to the understandings of children. It opens with the *Christian covenant* entered into by baptism, describing its mystical effects, and its solemn engagements. The child repeats, that he has been made a *member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven*; that he must *renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and*
all

all the sinful lusts of the flesh; and he declares that he verily thinks he is bound to believe and to do as his Godfathers and Godmothers promised for him.—There is not here a single notion adequate to his apprehension.

The second part, on the *Christian faith*, proposes the Creed, which the child rehearses as containing the articles of his belief; he says what are the chief of these, declaring his belief in the mysterious doctrine of the *Trinity*; in God the Father, who made the world; in God the Son, who redeemed it; and in God the Holy Ghost, who *sanctifieth him, and all the elect people of God*.——If it be expedient so soon to propose these sublime doctrines, it must be owing to their great importance in the Christian scheme. Yet I think, were the mind prepared for them, their impression would be more distinct and awful. Had I a secret to communicate to a child, on which much depended, I would do it with solemnity, and when some maturity of years insured its effect.

The third part treats on the *Christian obedience*, in the ten commandments, which the child repeats, adding the two chief things to be learned from them, his duty towards God, and his duty towards his neighbour, and these duties he exemplifies in two answers, which are clear and comprehensive.—

The

The whole article is admirably drawn. I can only regret that, instead of the third, it does not possess the first place. The obvious order in instruction is, to proceed from what is most evident to what is less so. Here, on the contrary, the process is from things mysterious and incomprehensible to things practical and of easy evidence.

The fourth part is on the *Christian prayer*.—This succession is natural, and connects very well with the preceding article.

The last part treats of the *Christian sacraments*.—The technical terms and the metaphysical ideas of this article entitle it, undoubtedly, to the place it occupies. No part of it is within the reach of children; but it must be supposed, that they have, by this time, gone through instruction, which has prepared them for it.

My objection then to the Church catechism is, that its arrangement is preposterous, that its language is too abstruse and scholastic, and that it is not sufficiently broken by familiar questions. To this it may also be seriously added, that it no where distinctly mentions a future state of rewards and punishments, only in the brief words of the Creed.

That of the Dissenters, entitled the *Assembly's Catechism*, even as abridged for beginners, contains

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all the faults, and not all the perfections, of the former. In the very second page, having stated the doctrine of the *Trinity*, it proceeds to the *decrees of God*, which the child defines to be *his eternal purpose, according to the council of his own will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath fore-ordained whatsoever shall come to pass*. Similar abstruse matter is every where introduced; nor do I hardly find a question, excepting perhaps on the practical duties of the Ten Commandments, which can, with the smallest propriety, be offered to a child.

I shall only further notice the Catechism of the *Roman Catholics*; in the first page of which the child remarks, that *his soul is like to God, because it is a spirit endowed with understanding and free-will, and is immortal; and that as in God there is one God and three persons, so in man there is one soul and three powers, which are will, memory, and understanding*.—This may suffice to shew how ill constructed it is; besides, the same bad arrangement and confusion of ideas, in speculative and in practical, in mystery and in moral truths, pervade the whole. A mind thus tutored, can see nothing distinctly: the whole system of ideas must be confused, answering to the catechistical process whereby they were introduced. It will be well, if instability in belief be not the consequence of a method so incoherent and undefined.

Were

Were these, and other catechisms, reformed agreeably to the plan I suggested for the schools, it would, in my opinion, be a valuable amendment. The mind would be first provided with what is fundamental, and adapted to its capacities, and its stores of improvement would gradually swell, as nature opened and instruction served. I would also recommend, that in delivering the particular tenets of societies, with accuracy and fullness, no reflections, particularly of an acrimonious or malevolent tendency, be introduced on the opinions of others. Let each cause stand on its own basis. Am I a better man, or is my faith more secure, because my brother errs? Besides, from such illiberal reflections (with which most books, hitherto put into the hands of children, abound) have certainly arisen all the evils of religious animosity, under which, even in a civil light, this country has so long and so often suffered. I well know, there is nothing in the principles of any society which can most distantly tend to make them bad men, or bad citizens. This being so, why may they not, unmolested, profess their peculiar modes of belief, with the same liberty as you or I?

It may perhaps be apprehended, that the scheme I have proposed, will generate in young people an *indifference* to particular modes of faith. It may

give them, it will be said, sound principles of morality; but will it give them *orthodoxy*?—*This* must depend on the zeal of their respective ministers; and as to *indifference*, it may easily be removed by the same agent. By the rules of the institution, the children will be required to assist at their own places of worship: and will their minds, think you, be less prepared for instruction, than when before they were utterly neglected? If indeed no care be taken to superadd those tenets, which they who make the objection deem so essential, I do not pretend to say, that we shall imprint any warmth of attachment to them. To attempt it would be to subvert a leading principle in the plan. Theirs will be the blame who have an easy remedy at hand. But should the worst case sometimes happen; which must be thought preferable, morality without orthodoxy, or orthodoxy without morality? They will be careful to unite them, who sincerely think the union of any value.

The importance of the subject has detained me longer than I expected, though it is the point I had principally in view. And I will close it with the sanguine expectation, that the great effect of reforming the manners of the people will be, more or less, produced, on whatever plan the Sunday schools are conducted, provided it be with zeal and per-

perseverance. May not government then (for the existence of the state, as a great and honourable nation, is at stake) give them a powerful support? May not the mitred heads of the church, and their dignified clergy, co-operate with their wealth, their learning, and their influence; for they, surely, are much interested in the suppression of vice and the promotion of virtue? And may not all the heads of the dissenting congregations, rich in zeal and sacred wisdom, bring their forces also in aid of the general cause?

Engaged as I am on the subject, I cannot leave it while an idea remains with me, which possibly, in the event of things, may benefit the nation which I love. Yet has the whole matter, I know, been often reviewed before, and presented in all forms, to the public. In the concerns of men are propitious and unpropitious moments. How to seize the first is important, as on it depends the success of the wisest undertakings. The waves of distant commotion, which the rumours of war excite, seem subsiding to a calm. At home, the violence of party is stilled, and we are disposed to union. These are the auspicious moments when attention may be given to the internal œconomy; when schemes of reformation may be discussed, and new arrangements made, where necessary.

We have traced the corruption in the manners of the people to its source, and we have found, I trust, an efficacious remedy to the evil. The depravity in the higher, and in the highest, ranks in life, springs undoubtedly from a similar cause. I am not disposed to survey the times through the medium of splenetic observation. But he must be blind indeed who cannot see the falling off; and he little less so, who is ignorant of the cause. It lies in the want of discipline and religious instruction in our schools and colleges. The regulations, which our ancestors made for these establishments, were wisely planned. In this innovating and affected age, they are as unwisely neglected. It is time the public should be no longer duped and insulted. Surely they have a claim to see those places well administered, which the piety and beneficence of their ancestors contributed to found.

I know the excuse is, that the age will not bear restraint, and that the manners of the world out of doors are such, that no discipline can preserve the youth from their contagion. That parents even help on the evil, by extravagant allowances of money, and by the bad example they shew them, during the recesses, at home.—Had mankind, at all times, been disposed to listen to what indolence and culpable remissness might urge in their defence, the world indeed had, at this moment, been worse constituted

stituted than it is. *The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat*, said the first woman; but her apology was not admitted. I can feel the force of the defence which is made, and I am willing, in some instances, to allow its validity. Universally it cannot apply, where means are used to counteract the bad influence which is complained of. In proportion as this presses, and penetrates into the schools and universities, vigour should be used to oppose it. There are officers, whose hands are invested with every necessary power. Let this be exerted, and the reins of discipline drawn tight. No evil exists that perseverent labour will not surmount. Were our officers, military and naval, permitted to urge the depravity of the age, as a sufficient apology for permitting discipline to relax in their several departments, where, at this time, would be the strength and dignity of Britain? Discipline and subordination they only aim at, and they have it. Would not similar means succeed in our colleges?

“ I have myself, says Mr. Knox, (*Liberal Educ.*
 “ p. 344.) resided long in one of the universities,
 “ (and the sisters are much alike) and I have seen
 “ in it many evils.—I saw immorality, *habitual*
 “ drunkenness, idleness, ignorance, and vanity,
 “ *openly and boastingly* obtruding themselves on
 “ *public* view. I saw them triumphing *without con-*
 “ *troul* over the timidity of modest merit.”—And
 shall

shall there be no hand willing or strong enough to oppose this monstrous evil? If they, whose duty it is, will not attempt it, the legislative arm must be implored to interfere. It is too well known what are, in some, the sordid motives and interested views which check the execution of duty; while in vain do many honest and virtuous characters deplore an evil which unavailingly they strive to oppose.

What can be expected, when young men, thus vitiated, come out upon the public? I pretend not to say, that their literary acquirements will be none, because in some, at least, this object will have been seriously attended to. I speak of the moral character; of that mental form, which a becoming sense of honour animates, and the love of truth ennobles. The seeds of these qualities were not sown, and it would be folly to look for the fruit. Yet these are the men by whom all the higher departments in life, and in the state, will be occupied, and the same must figure through the less conspicuous lines of society. The nation is then heard to complain, that places of the highest trust are occupied by gamesters, libertines, and spendthrifts; that the naval and military departments are full of fine gentlemen, of debauchees, of men of levity in appearance, in conversation, and in principle; that in the senate, they are re-

presented

presented by men, whose youth, or want of talents, or privation of common honour and honesty, render unfit to be trusted with the concerns of a great and extended empire. When Cyneas, say they, went out from the Roman senate, he reported, that he had seen a congress of kings. Such was their comportment and air of dignity.

There is, surely, a *national character* in every people, and ours has been sometimes said to resemble that of Rome. Alas, *we have been!* Affecting levity has taken place of our grave and thoughtful air; and to stern and independent virtue have succeeded Asiatic manners.

How, in the name of foldiership and sense,
Should England prosper, when such things, as smooth
And tender as a girl, all essenced o'er
With odours, and as profligate as sweet,
Who sell their laurel for a myrtle wreath,
And love when they should fight; when such as these
Presume to lay their hands upon the ark
Of her magnificent and awful cause.

COWPER.

Such affectation is ridiculous, and like every other, sits very awkwardly on the wearer. It is imported from abroad; for not satisfied with the depravity our young men can contract at home, we send them into other countries, there to cull the follies and vices which may please them best.

Were

Were the mind properly prepared, that is, mature in judgment and acquired knowledge, travelling would open to it sources of information, and furnish opportunities of reflection, which cannot be obtained by him who never leaves his native land. But to expect that boys should make observations on men and manners, should weigh and compare the laws, institutions, customs, and characteristics of various people, is to expect an impossibility. Yet if this be not done, wherein lies the advantage? It is no less absurd to suppose, that boys will not be struck and captivated with vanity and trifles. What strikes and captivates will infallibly adhere to the mind.

Serious and thinking parents, who see the inevitable ruin which threatens the morals and constitution of their children in the public schools, have recourse to other modes of education. They give them to the care of private tutors, a plan which a thousand disadvantages attend; or they even send them abroad, hoping that, with some attention, they may acquire learning with less alloy of depravity. The contraction of foreign manners and foreign habits of mind is perhaps the least evil, to which this method gives rise. An Italian or French school cannot be the seminary for an Englishman. It is the fashion, I know, to ridicule this idea, as unbecoming that being, which has now
discovered

discovered that he is a citizen of the world. For my part, I respect the local attachment which a man feels for his country, though it is stiled a prejudice. It takes its rise in nature, and is attended with effects greatly beneficial. Were this prejudice in favour of our country removed, are we sure it would not be succeeded by others, less reasonable and less innocent? Are we even certain, that prejudices against it might not find admission?

To whatever side then we turn our eyes, either at home or abroad, nothing can be discovered in the present system of education, but what calls for reformation. By no other means can the evil be removed.

The general statutes and regulations of the colleges and schools I believe to be excellent. It is only necessary, therefore, to give them life and vigour. Discipline, in a moment, will revive, and with it all the advantages of subordination, order, and œconomy. An agent only is wanting to give motion to the engine. Let the powers be used with which the regular governors are invested. They seem sufficient for every purpose. Zeal only and serious exertions have not hitherto been found. I think they must now be roused, when the unanimous voice of the nation demands it. Unfortunately,

unately, after reiterated attempts, should it be discovered, that the evil is too deeply rooted to be removed by common means, others must be resorted to. To our legislators the constitution has given a power which nothing can controul. In affairs of magnitude, then, we know what to look to. Never could it be exerted to a more valuable or important purpose. I should hear with pleasure that a bill were brought into the House, “ for the
 “ better regulation of public schools and colleges,
 “ by giving vigour to the ancient statutes, or by
 “ enacting new ones, if judged expedient.” The mover of such a bill would be a patriot indeed.

There is not, after all, in the affairs of men, a more forlorn or arduous undertaking than that of reformation. It has every obstacle to combat which interest, and passion, and prejudice can lay before it. A plan, new from the foundation and in all its parts, is more easily executed. This, on trial, has generally been verified; when after repeated attempts, and much time lost, no progress has been made; but vexation and disappointment have accompanied every step. Then is recourse had to measures entirely new. It had better have been done at first.

Our Minister, whose mind is ardent and whose views are comprehensive, will not, we know, shrink
 from

from labour. To him I would propose the scheme of digesting a *New plan of national Education*, adapted to the different orders in society. All the learning and wisdom of the State would be ready to co-operate. The measure has already been attempted in some countries, and it is proposed, I believe, in all; for the evil which called for it is general. Objections have been made, light and trivial, such as men, habituated to old forms, and prejudiced from want of sight, are used to make. Nor are the difficulties which would attend the measure so great as might be apprehended. Much light has been thrown on the subject, by the ablest writers in this and other countries. This has smoothed the path, and excited besides a very general attention. What is ardently desired, is easy in execution; though when the welfare of a nation is at stake, ease or difficulty make no impression on the patriot's eye.

The Dissenters have just opened two academies, on liberal and extensive plans; and as the general discipline of that society is well known, the happiest effects may be expected from the institution.—But no where have my eyes been so pleased, and my mind so charmed, as with the Quakers' establishment in the North. Mildness there tempers the severity of discipline, and virtue becomes more amiable by the simplicity of its form; while the mind, in the mean time, is tutored to the sterner habits of industrious

dustrious labour. The legislator of Sparta would have viewed the institution with admiration and pleasure. It is only in a society, so organized as that of the Quakers, that regulations can be formed which shall exhibit such order, such decency, such decorum. But what we cannot rival we may imitate. The institution is purely for the lower class.

I have little more to offer on these very important subjects; but it is the promotion of Sunday schools which I have principally in view. The zeal which first appeared in the business, begins, I fear, to cool; either because the progress, which some expected, is not made, or from other obvious motives. I must repeat, that it is to the next generation we must look for great and visible effects: there most certainly they will be found. But our own times will not be without their effects either. The measure of these we have it in our own power to determine. Were the plan I suggested very generally adopted, some of the evils, which have hitherto been experienced, would, I think, vanish. It would facilitate the progress of instruction to the children; while perhaps it might inspire in the breasts of the teachers and visitors a spirit of laudable emulation, which would animate their zeal, and give it perseverance. Never, I am sure, were offered to any nation motives more cogent, than what every honest man must now feel, to support
an

an institution, on which depends all that is valuable and dear in life.

It may be thought by some, that I have ascribed too much efficacy to *moral causes*. View then those societies, where attention is given to the instruction of the poorer class; and then survey the melancholy prospect which other churches exhibit. As surely do good manners and industry accompany the first, as depravity, idleness, and improvidence are visible in the latter. The effect is not ascribable to any peculiar tenets, which may be more favourable to the growth of virtue. What good husbandry produces in the fields of the industrious farmer, precisely the same does education effect in the moral world. The Author of all Things would have ill-provided for the establishment of truth and virtue, had he not pre-ordained a fixed system of laws, which must universally prevail. On the certain agency of these is founded every theory of education.

Though I have mentioned the general depravity of all orders in the State, it will not, I hope, be thought that my eye is so organized, as to be incapable of seeing what is good and virtuous in many individuals. Never, I doubt not, have the moral and christian virtues been carried to a higher perfection than this age and country can now exhibit.

And

And are not these, peradventure, the *ten righteous* men, for whose sake Sodom and Gomorrah shall not be destroyed?

I will draw my ideas to a more simple point. Possibly the effect may be better felt.—Viewing the decline and fall of States, I ascribed the event, with all other writers, to the want of virtue in the people. To account for this, I delineated the physical effect of vicious indulgence on the individual;—and if here it be so fatal, said I, cannot the same reasoning be applied to a society, of which the major part is depraved? It can evidently. I then considered the nature of the selfish principle, and the operation of laws, as supposed capable to check the spread of vice. But in spite of these and all other means, nations I saw had fallen; therefore were they insufficient. I took a brief survey of Rome and of its manners, before the Republic was enslaved, and I left the application to my reader. I mentioned the certain agency of moral causes, which, nor the boasted excellence of our political constitution, nor any temporary exertions, however vigorous, could invalidate. I glanced at the effects of trade and manufactures, expressing a wish rather to see agriculture extended, than cities built. The country, said I, is the nursery where strong bodies and sound minds are bred. As a believer in divine Providence, I stated the awful visitations

visitations of heaven; yet I hoped it was still in our power to avert the fatal day. At this the true patriot would labour: he would first look for the source of the evil (which he finds in the depraved manners of the people), then he would apply the most efficacious remedy.

I described the nature and utility of religious instruction, which having been sadly neglected, has principally caused the disorder. Various means to effect a reformation, inadequate and insufficient, have been projected; these I enumerated. The institution of Sunday schools seemed alone calculated to reach the root of the evil. I described their obvious effects. Every plan should be made as productive as possible. Had this been done? It seemed not: I therefore proposed a scheme for extending the benefits of Sunday schools, and answered the objections which might be urged against it. I endeavoured to shew that our most popular catechisms are, in their present form, very ill adapted to the capacities of children, that they should be amended, and in what manner.

In a cursory view I then surveyed the state of education in our public schools and colleges; with Mr. Knox I deplored their fallen state: and I joined the public voice to entreat a speedy restoration of discipline and an effectual reformation.

These means alone can restore virtue to the individual, and on it build the prosperity and firmness of the State; they can embellish private life, and exalt the public character; to religion they can give its former energy; and to the principles, which ennoble human nature, all their powers of operation; the national character they can re-establish, and once more lift up the English name: in a word, these means alone can retard our decline, and save a falling nation.

THE END.

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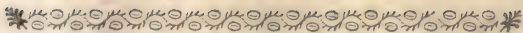
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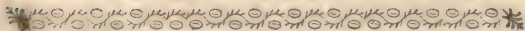
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AN
ADDRESS
TO THE
PROTESTANT DISSENTERS.



A



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PROTESTANT DISSENTERS.

By the Rev. JOSEPH BERINGTON.

Cum tua prævideas oculis mala lippus inunãis,
Cur in amicorum vitiis tam cernis acutum,
Quam aut aquila, aut serpens Epidaurius?

HOR.

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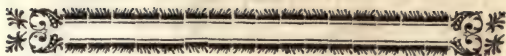
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MDCCLXXXVII.



A N
A D D R E S S
T O T H E
Protestant Dissenters, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

WHILE the business was pending, and you looked anxiously to its issue, I would not disturb you. Indeed, that was not a moment for such expostulations as I had to make, and probably you would not have listened to me. Other thoughts, and those of a very interesting nature, engaged your attention. But now when parliament has rejected your application, and disappointment (for disappointment surely you have felt) has checked the effervescence of your
B minds,

minds, an individual, unconnected with party, and himself oppressed, may, he presumes, claim a momentary hearing from you, and find it.

I can say with truth that I was pleased, when I heard of your design of petitioning parliament for a further redress of grievances. Men of little delicacy of conscience might talk lightly of grievances, which they said, the greatest part of you did not feel, and which demanded but a moderate pliancy of disposition to surmount; but you surely were the best judges of their real extent and pressure. The mind of an Englishman does not easily bend to the smallest oppression; and and if you felt yourselves aggrieved by the obnoxious acts, you complained of, it will not be said, that you might not ask for their repeal, knowing what it is to suffer for conscience sake, I have learned to sympathise in the sufferings of others. I therefore, and the body of men to which I belong, wished you success in your application. But

But my benevolence, I own, soon received a severe shock. Your printed *case*, designed for the instruction of the members of both houses, and purposely circulated through the country, was put into my hands. I read it. Many things pleased me much ; but there were a few clauses so illiberal, and so unfounded, that my mind recoiled with horror. I could hardly persuade myself to believe that men of information, of policy, of religion, of improved virtue, could be so inconsistent, as even then to profess *intolerance*, when they complained of its injustice, and wished to remove its galling influence from themselves. You have done worse than this. You have thrown out *insinuations*, at once *false* and *malevolent*, when the object of them merited no such treatment from you. Do you think your cause called for that support?

Gentlemen! the charges I bring against you are severe and solemn: it is therefore incumbent on me to prove their truth.

The *corporation* and *test acts* were the two statutes, of which you complained.—By the first, enacted in the year 1661, the 13th of Charles II, it is provided, “That no person or persons, shall for ever hereafter be placed, elected, or chosen in, or to, any corporation-offices, that shall not have, within one year before such election, or choice, taken the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, according to the rites of the church of *England*.”—By the *test act*, made in 1672, the 25th of the same reign it is enacted, “That all and every person or persons, that shall be admitted, entered, placed, or taken, into any office, or offices, civil, or military, or shall receive any pay, salary, fee, or wages, by reason of any patent or grant of his majesty, or shall have command or place of trust from or under his majesty, his heirs or successors, or by his or their authority, or by authority derived from him or them, within this realm of England, dominion of Wales, or town of Berwick upon Tweed, or in his majesty’s navy, or in the
several

several islands of Jersey and Guernsey, or that shall be admitted into any service or employment in his majesty's household or family, — shall receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, according to the usage of the church of *England*, within three months after his or their admittance in, or receiving their said authority and employment, in some public church, upon the Lord's day commonly called Sunday, immediately after divine service."

You briefly relate the circumstances in which these acts passed, and I cannot say they are mistated. That, regarding corporations, you observe, passed in a period of great heat and violence, the year after the restoration, and *probably*, you say, was designed against *some* of the protestant dissenters. How gently is this expressed! The fact, as our historians you well know, relate it, was—The king, with his ministers, and the majority in both houses, hated the presbyterians, whom they considered as the authors of the late rebellion.

In their hands remained still great power, for, during the protectorate, they had been appointed magistrates in all the country towns. To leave authority in such hands seemed dangerous; it was therefore judged expedient to regulate the corporations, and to expel those magistrates, whose principles were inimical to the constitution civil and ecclesiastical. This gave rise to the *corporation-act*.—It was besides rumoured that new plots were forming in the state, and they obviously would be marked for the authors, whom long practice had rendered expert in the business. The nation and parliament were alarmed, and a committee was appointed to inquire into the affair, that measures might be taken to secure the peace of the nation. It was judged expedient to frame the *act* in question. Could men of a disaffected and dangerous spirit be kept out of offices, their power of doing mischief would be abridged. There was little truth, I believe, in these reports, but it answered the designs of
the

the court-party, and paved the way for the *act of uniformity*, which soon after passed.

To be so very guarded, therefore, in your expressions, was too punctilious. *Probably*, you say, the act was designed against *some* of your ancestors. Indeed, Gentlemen, it was obviously designed against the whole family, though every branch might not have equally deserved it. Why should truth be with-held?

Your forefathers, it is true, were guilty of great excesses. But in those excesses I can trace the gracious designs of Providence towards England. Its political humours were foul, and of that obstinate nature, which only violent medicines could remove. These you applied with a bold hand. The patient had strength of constitution to bear it, and we have to thank you for our present health. The liberty we enjoy, and the blessings of our well-poised government are certainly due to the exertions of your ancestors. So it is by
forms

storms and tempests that our atmosphere is often cleared from noxious vapours, which otherwise might spread pestilence and death through the land. The mariner indeed who is buried in the waves, or the landman who sees his harvest lost, looks only to the evil, and laments his cruel fate; while minds more composed and penetrating see through the veil, and adore in the whirlwind the beneficent hand of God.

I think then you might have fairly owned that the *Corporation act* was *wholly* designed against you. Your claim to present indulgence would not have been weakened by the concession; for how culpable soever the old stock might have been, you, their children, men of a new bone and spirit, could have nothing to apprehend from the most jealous government. Your loyalty, your patriotism, your respect for the laws, your manly exertions, your love of virtue, and your zeal for religion were all conspicuous.

In

In stating the circumstances, wherein the *test act* passed, you have not been so reserved. “ It, you apprehend, was *wholly* made against Papists, and not to prevent any danger which could happen to the nation or church from the Dissenters.”—The *established church*, it is well known, could, at no time, have any thing to fear from you ; therefore such precaution must have been useless. Against *us* the whole weight of the statute was aimed, and you detail the circumstances of the time with apparent complacency.—We acknowledge the *truth* of your assertion ; but, in these times of more generous humanity, would it have argued a degeneracy of character had you softened the harsh statement, by some qualifying clause. You might have said that the bill passed, as the former against you did, in a period of *great heat* and *violence* ; or that the Papists, perhaps, were not so culpable, as the rage of party represented them. How stern is the selfish eye in the view of every other interest but its own !

The

The *test act* passed in 1672, or rather the year after.—Since the year 1670, the nation had been justly alarmed. The counsels of the *cabal*-ministry then began to prevail, and never had power been committed to the hands of more dangerous men. These were Clifford, Ashley, Buckingham, Arlington and Lauderdale. Clifford was a Roman catholic, and in great favour with the king: Ashley, soon after earl of Shaftesbury, a believer in no religion, had successively joined every party, and in every party had taken the lead; he had served Cromwell, and his influence with the *presbyterians* was well known: Buckingham, a light and airy nobleman, had too little reflection to embrace any steady principles in religion or politics: Arlington, secretly attached to the faith of Rome, and in which he died, was not remarkable for his vices or talents: “Lauderdale,” says Mr. Hume, “had long, been a bigotted and furious *presbyterian*, and the opinions of that sect still kept possession of his mind, how little

little soever they appeared in his conduct."

Such were the men, who held the reins of government. Their dark designs were not at once visible; but it soon appeared that they meant to make the king absolute, and to enslave the people. They proposed an alliance with France, and war with Holland. From the first, they said, subsidies might be drawn; and were Holland subdued, it might serve to curb that romantic spirit of liberty and independence, which seemed to derive energy from contemplating the fame and grandeur of a proud republic.—An alliance with France was soon after formed, one article of which is said to have regarded the establishment of the catholic religion. But in this the king was not serious: he only aimed to get money. If the ministers meant it, surely Clifford and Arlington were the least blameable of the junto.

In

In the month of March, 1671, died the duchess of York, daughter of the earl of Clarendon, and in her last sickness she declared her belief in the catholic religion. This was the prelude to a more important step. The duke, who had long been a secret member of that church, now threw aside all disguise, and openly announced his conversion. The new alliance with France, it is thought, inspired him with this sudden courage, and rendered him less solicitous of the affections of the English people.—Worldly prudence might arraign the measure; but if James was conscientiously convinced of the truth of the religion he embraced, his conduct must be termed disinterested and noble. He could not be actuated by any ungenerous motive.

“Unaccountable terrors of popery, says Mr. Hume, ever since the accession of the house of Stuart, had prevailed throughout the nation; but these had formerly been found so groundless, and
had

had been employed to so many bad purposes, that surmises of this nature were likely to meet with the less credit amongst all men of sense; and nothing but the duke's imprudent bigotry could have convinced the whole nation of his change of religion. Popery, which had hitherto been only a hideous spectre, was now become a real ground of terror, being openly and zealously embraced by the heir to the crown, a prince of industry and enterprise; while the king himself was not entirely free from like suspicions."

In 1672, as money was wanting to carry on the military preparations against Holland, and Charles would not assemble his parliament, whose just indignation he dreaded, other means were to be resorted to. Clifford dared to advise the shutting up the Exchequer, and retaining all the payments, which should be made into it. In reward for this service he received the staff of treasurer, and a peerage.—A general confusion prevailed in the city,
fol-

followed by the ruin of many. The bankers stopped payment; the merchants could answer no bills; distrust took place every where, with a stagnation of commerce, by which the public was universally affected.

To conciliate the good-will of one part of his subjects, the king was disposed to try an expedient, which he had before attempted. By virtue of an authority, which he said, was inherent in him, and recognized by several acts of parliament, he issued a proclamation, suspending the penal laws, enacted against all nonconformists, or recusants whatsoever. To the *Protestant Dissenters*, he granted the *public* exercise of their religion, and to the *Catholics* the exercise of it in *private* houses. Thus the dissenters, observes Mr. Hume, the inveterate enemies to the court, were mollified; while the catholics enjoyed more liberty than the laws had hitherto allowed them.

But

But this proclamation, you say, was made *chiefly in favour of papists*. The king, I know, loved us better than he did you; and he had reason for it. You he feared; and it was his maxim to court his enemies. However, the *advantage* of the proclamation certainly was on your side.

On the 4th of February, 1673, after prorogations continued for near two years, Charles met his parliament. He addressed them with cordiality and confidence: “A few days, said he, before I declared war, I put forth my declaration for indulgence to dissenters; and I have hitherto found a good effect of it, by securing peace at home, when I had war abroad. There is one part of it, that has been subject to misconstruction; which is that concerning the papists; as if more liberty were granted to them, than to other recusants, when it is plain there is less. For the others have public places allowed them, and I never intended that they
should

should have any ; but only have the freedom of their religion in their own houses, without the concourse of others. And I could not grant them less than this, when I had extended so much more grace to others, *most of them* having been loyal, and in the service of me, and of the king my father ; and in the whole course of this indulgence, I do not intend, that it shall any way prejudice the church ; but I will support its right in its full power.”

This language was sensible and manly ; but parliament was not in a humour to be easily managed. Of the grievances they complained of, none was so alarming as the declaration of indulgence. It struck at the very life of the constitution, and established a power, absolute and uncontrollable. Against the exercise of such a power, they remonstrated. The king defended the measure ; nor did it seem that he would recede from the extravagant pretension : the commons, however, persisted. It was a crisis of great importance.

ance. Charles again reviewed his resources, and he numbered the combined forces which opposed him: He saw the precipice, on which he stood. His own character also, naturally pliant and careless, came in aid of the advice which prudence suggested to him. To yield with the better grace, he asked the opinion of the peers: they advised compliance. The king then sent for the declaration, and with his own hands broke the seals. This step gave the utmost satisfaction, and the commons expressed their warmest duty to his majesty. In this moment of mutual goodwill, Charles assured them, that he would readily pass any law, they might offer, tending to dispel their suspicions, and to remove grievances.

Many of the dissenters, I believe, sided on this occasion, with the opposition. Among these was the alderman Love, you mention. Either they condemned the arbitrary measures which produced the declaration; or they found little satisfaction

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faction in the enjoyment of an indulgence, of which the catholic party was at the same time allowed to partake. Such a wayward disposition has been sometimes known to exist.

Parliament, though apparently satisfied with the king's compliance, was not willing to let the occasion pass without marking their strongest disapprobation of measures, which, it seemed, the court had pursued with much ardour. They would mortify the duke of York in his new religion; they would give the king to understand that neither his own favourite ministers, of the catholic persuasion, nor his brother's creatures, should have it in their power to execute their designs without molestation; and they would tell the whole catholic body, if, as some reported, they relied on any foreign aid for the establishment of their religion, that they should find an obstacle at home which would check their most sanguine

fanguine endeavours. The *test act* was prepared, and it passed into a law.

I allow then that this act was *chiefly* levelled against the roman catholics. Indeed its preamble declares it. But I have been thus minute in detailing the principal circumstances of the times, that you may see, that they were not less a period of *heat and violence*, than that in which the *corporation-act* was made. In the nation, besides, and particularly in parliament, it must appear, there was a great disposition to curb the dissenters, whose steps were watched, and whose general views were suspected. Nor can it be doubted, though they are not named in the act, that the *test* was designed against every description of nonconformists. In the lower house all the old loyalists were their avowed enemies, without counting the king's new favourites, who were numerous: Among the lords, few even of the lay peers could be their friends; and I need not, I think, mention the dis-

positions of the bishops, and of the whole established clergy out of doors. Men thus affected to the dissenters, would even more ardently adopt a scheme, which, under the shew of galling the roman catholics, would fall with equal weight on their enemies.—Allowing this to have been the case, are your present pretensions less founded and cogent?

In our justification I wish it also to be observed, that, though the act was designed against the catholics, yet that few, even then, of the number, merited a treatment so severe. They had no concern in the views of Charles or his brother, in the schemes of wild ministers, or in the machinations of bad politicians. They had suffered much in the royal cause, and were pining in penury and distress, under the additional pressure of cruel laws. Had they most distantly approved the measures, unconstitutional and dishonourable as they were, by which it was pretended, their friends aimed to
redress

redress their grievances, I am ready to admit that the test-act was a just curb to their desires. Nor am I so blind a partisan as not to allow that the act itself was wisely planned, considering the apprehensions entertained by many, that men then existed, who, to establish their religion, would not hesitate to overthrow the constitution. Could these men have been marked, and the community have been spared, it would have been a measure more just and laudable: But the innocent must sometimes suffer with the guilty.

Gentlemen, is it not better we should both lose sight of those days of heat and violence? Your conduct had been often censurable, and so had ours; but not in the same degree. Our political principles had both swerved; yours in favour of republicanism, ours of monarchy. We would have gone great lengths to have established our religion; you did establish yours, while the crown and mitre lay

trodden on the earth. I know not which is the worst form of government, absolute monarchy, or pure democracy: but I know that any set of men, who, in this country, should aim to establish either, would merit to be curbed by the severest laws. From the excesses of our progenitors we have both learned wisdom: let us then rejoice rather in our reformation, forget what is passed, and be friends.

I therefore condemn the general idea, which seems to run through the historical part of your printed *case*. You wish to hold us out as the only obnoxious party; as if in the proportion we shall appear guilty, your innocence will be prominent. Could not your cause rest on its own merit? The two statutes aggrieved you. That was enough. And your present principles and conduct, instead of restraints called for encouragement and praise. He who, to enhance his own pretensions, wantonly attacks his neighbour's
fame,

fame, leads me involuntarily to suspect that,

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

The account you give of the steps, which, at different periods, have been taken in parliament to procure you some relief from these oppressive laws, none of which were crowned with success, proves indeed that you had friends; but does it not also prove that your friends were out-numbered by your enemies? There is a comfort, however, in the reflection, that virtue, on this unjust earth, does not always find admirers, or the rewards it merits. We papists solace ourselves wonderfully in the reflection.

I shall now consider, as far as it regards my purpose, the general *reasons* you adduce, which, you think, should operate a repeal of the obnoxious *acts*.

I.—“ Every man, as it is now universally
 “ acknowledged, has an undoubted right
 “ to judge for himself in matters of re-
 “ ligion ;

qua his
 fellow man
 not qua
 himself

“ ligion ; nor ought his exercise of this
 “ right to be branded with a mark of in-
 “ famy.”

To this position I most cordially subscribe. It is founded on the clearest deductions of reason, and all the spirit of christianity tends to give it efficacy. Let it operate then in its universal extent. To admit general principles in theory, and to restrict them in practice, is, in a rational mind, the basest logic. Intolerance, that pretends to reason, is, in my eyes, worse than enthusiasm which persecutes from impulse. *Every man* has a right to judge for himself in matters of religion, you say. The only question then must be, whether Peter, or John, or Paul be *men*. You and I are men ; so is the Jew, so is the mahometan.

“ Nor ought his exercise of this right
 “ to be branded with a mark of infamy.”
 —Clearly it should not. As well give reason to man, and brand him for a *fool* because

cause he reasons. The absurdity is too glaring. Yet are you, and we, and all churches guilty of this absurdity ; we wish to fasten some opprobrium on one another. In this kingdom, all, who are not of the establishment, are branded ; but the mark on us is the most broad and flagrant. We do not merit it, however. And have not you yourselves, in the very publication I am examining, sinned against your own doctrine ? Prejudice is too often an overmatch for principle.

II. “ The holy Sacrament of the Lord’s
 “ Supper, being a matter purely of a religious nature, and being appointed by
 “ our blessed Saviour only for the remembrance of his death, ought not to be
 “ applied to the secular ends of civil societies.”

Nor should this position be controverted. Do you only allow that it applies to our situation, as well to your own.—It may appear strange, that men should
 have

have confounded things so evidently distinct, as are religion and politics: but as long as states shall adopt the antichristian maxim of supporting exclusively some favourite sect, so long must the confusion last; and divine and human, sacred and profane, temporal and eternal, earth and heaven, must be moulded into one heap, and the chaotic mass shall be called *pure christianity*.—Were you in power, would a proper discrimination, think you, be made; and would order once more exhibit the charming features of sacred truth? Were we in power, it would not, I know, be done. While then we are so kindly solicitous to take the *splinter* out of our brother's eye, let us not forget that perhaps there is a *beam* in our own.

III.—“ As dissenters are universally
 “ acknowledged to be well-affected to his
 “ majesty and the established government,
 “ and are ready to take the oaths re-
 “ quired by law, and to give the fullest
 “ proof of their loyalty, they think it
 “ hard

“ hard that their scruple to receive the
 “ sacrament after the manner of the
 “ church of England, or after the man-
 “ ner of *any* church, as a qualification
 “ for an office, should render them inca-
 “ pable of holding public employments,
 “ civil or military.”

This, gentlemen, is also our complaint.
 As you, we are acknowledged, and I trust
universally, to be well-affected to his ma-
 jesty and the established government;
 with you we are ready to give the fullest
 proof of our loyalty, only we are not
 ready to take *all* the oaths required by
 law; and with you we think it hard
 that our scruple to receive the sacra-
 ment in the church of England, should
 exclude us from the common rights of
 citizens.

You know the oaths we refuse to take,
 and as the subject of them is as much of
 a *religious* nature, as the sacrament itself
 of the Lord's Supper, *your reasoning* against
 taking

taking the latter must apply with equal force to them. We are required by those oaths, to renounce the doctrine of *transubstantiation*, to declare that the *invocation* of saints, and the *sacrament of the mass*, are *superstitious* and *idolatrous*, and that he, whom we consider as the *head* of our church, has no *spiritual pre-eminence* over us. Can there be doctrines of a more abstracted nature than these, or with which states, it seems, should have less concern?

Were you truly *consistent*, yourselves would refuse to take these oaths. You would scruple to take the sacrament, with a view to a civil qualification, even in your own church. How then, agreeably with this declaration, can you renounce on oath the doctrine of transubstantiation, to qualify yourselves, it being evidently of a religious nature? It is not the truth or *falsehood*, of doctrines at which you hesitate, so much as at the incongruity of adapting religion to the secular ends of society.

IV.—“The

IV.—“ The occasional receiving of the
 “ Lord’s Supper, as a qualification for a
 “ place, cannot, in the nature of things,
 “ imply, that those who thus receive it,
 “ mean to declare their full and entire
 “ approbation of the whole constitution
 “ and frame of the established church ;
 “ since men may be compelled by their
 “ necessities, or allured by secular advantages,
 “ to do what they would not do,
 “ were they left to their free choice. As
 “ from these motives, persons may be induced
 “ to conform to the established
 “ church in this particular instance,
 “ though they do not approve of its
 “ forms and ceremonies in general, so,
 “ from the same motives, others may
 “ comply with the sacramental test who
 “ are not even christians, and who therefore
 “ cannot be supposed to wish well
 “ to christianity itself, or to any national
 “ establishment of it whatsoever.
 “ Hence it is apparent, that such a test
 “ can be no real or effectual security to
 “ the church of England. *It is also apprehended,*

“ *prehended, that, independently of any re-*
 “ *marks upon the doctrine of papal dispensa-*
 “ *tions, the sacramental test complained of*
 “ *may be received by many papists, because*
 “ *many of them hold the church of England*
 “ *to be no church, her ministers no ministers,*
 “ *and her sacraments to be no sacraments.”*

The last lines marked in italics, are the
 passage, at which, I said, my mind recoiled,
 and to that I alluded when I talked of
 insinuations, *false and malevolent*. Its in-
 duction also was wanton, for without it,
 the general reasoning was full and con-
 clusive.

Nor is it I only, or those of my per-
 suasion, whom this ungenerous clause has
 offended. Men of all religions, with
 whom I have conversed, and some of your
 own people, have expressed their utter
 disapprobation of it. I have conversed,
 indeed, only with men of liberal minds;
 and as long as I am permitted to chuse
 my own company, I will associate with no
 others.

others. When they cease to be found, it will be time to retire to the woods.— One of your brightest ornaments, a man who does honour to human nature, and in whom his country may be proud, thus expresses himself:—"What I dislike in the printed case is the conclusion of article 4, which contains a very unjust insinuation against the catholics, none of whom, I believe, can be proved to have received the sacrament at the church of England; and therefore it ought not to be said that they *might* do it. Themselves know this best; and their conduct proves, that they do not think it right to do it, whatever advantages they might secure by a compliance with it."

"Independently of any remarks upon the doctrine of papal dispensations."— Do you then really think that we admit such doctrine? Ever since it was first objected to us, (and it was first objected, when he was esteemed the best christian, who could address his adversary in the foulest

foulest language), we have uniformly reprobated the calumny. We give no such dispensing power to any man. And in the oath of *allegiance*, lately prepared for us, do not we disclaim the position in terms the most full and unequivocal? There is in some minds, it seems, an inveteracy of suspicion which nothing can eradicate. True it is; we do not organize ourselves, and happy are they on whom nature smiled propitious in their birth.

But as if the charge of *knavery* were not sufficient, we must also be made *fools* in this business. It is asserted that, we admit a power which can *dispense* with our most solemn obligations. Why then have we not availed ourselves of it? For more than two centuries, we have suffered ourselves to be exposed to persecuting laws, and to feel all their weight, while you tell us, we had an instrument in our hands which could have broken our fetters at a blow. The prison door was open, and we refused to go out. No, gentlemen,

would have been prudent to have enquired whether any of us *had done it*, or whether we ourselves thought it *lawful* so to do. The information would have been easily procured. I will tell you then; no Catholic ever has taken the test, nor can he with a safe conscience.

Your casuistry in this matter is curious.
 “ *Many* papists *may* do it you say, because
 “ *many* of them hold the church of Eng-
 “ land to be no church, her ministers
 “ no ministers, and her sacraments no
 “ sacraments.”—You need not have limited your expression. We *all* hold the church of England to be no church; if by *church* you understand a society of true believers founded by Christ and his apostles.—We *all* hold her ministers to be no ministers; because we conceive they have not their mission from Christ, or that they do not succeed to those who were immediately sent by him.—But we *none* of us hold her *sacraments* to be no sacraments; because her *baptism* we admit

mit to be as valid as our own; though we reject her sacrament of the Lord's supper, as unscriptural, and unsupported by the belief of antiquity. Such is our belief. Yet we refuse to take the sacramental test, because it would be the profanation of a rite which by all men is deemed holy, and it would be the public declaration of belief in a religion, which the conscience at the same time rejected. Even the framers of the act, who were our enemies, thought too well of our sincerity to imagine it could be warped by such weak casuistry as you have suggested.

Now, gentlemen, let me examine your consciences. Why do not you take the test on the strength of this same casuistry? You hold the church of England to be no church; otherwise why do you *dissent* from her? Her ministers to be no ministers, as the history of *presbyterianism* can demonstrate; and her sacraments to be

no sacraments; or why do you scruple to take the holy bread from her hand?

As you seem disposed to think us capable of acting with great *duplicity* in this business, either by virtue of papal *dispensations*, which yourselves have conjured up, or by casuistical *evasions*, of which also yourselves are the authors, a man, less moderate than myself, might be inclined to retaliate. He would bring before you those times when the doctrine of *occasional conformity* was so much agitated among you, and when many availed themselves of it to retain, or to accept, benefices in the church, idly arguing that the *outward man* might conform, whilst the *inward man* remained true and immaculate. But such retaliation only serves to irritate, when every effort should be exerted to close the breaches which former animosities have made, and to diffuse a wider stream of general benevolence.

One circumstance, however, is so prominent, that I cannot pass it by. Look
through

through the army, the navy, the civil offices, and all places of command and trust, throughout his majesty's dominions, and you will find protestant dissenters in them all. For this they must have taken the qualifying sacramental test. In similar stations no roman catholics will be found; unless perhaps a few who, by some interest, have evaded the test, or if they have taken it, will be considered as having renounced their religion. Owing to this fatal statute it is, that our young men of family are driven from their native country, to earn a scanty livelihood under some foreign standard. I blame not men of your persuasion, if their consciences can bend to it, for conforming to what the laws direct; I only mean to observe how hard it is that we should suffer so severely, and should at the same time be charged with an hypocritical conformity, as if our consciences were pliant as a glove, or as if we fattened in the sunshine of ease, office, and preferment,

5.—“ The oaths of allegiance and supremacy, and the declaration against transubstantiation, have without the sacramental test, been found *effectual* for more than a century to exclude papists from both houses of parliament.”

Reconcile this, gentlemen, if you can, with your insinuation about papal dispensations. These oaths, you observe, have been found *effectual*, for more than a century, to exclude us from parliament. And would not *dispensations* from Rome have applied equally to them, as to the test, had we believed in their efficacy? Or do you think us so ignorant as, in more than a century, not to have discovered that the cases were parallel? Surely there is something strangely inconsistent in this style of argument; but I fear I can account for it. In speaking of the test, the repeal of which you meditated, it was your interest to shew that its operation was chiefly felt by yourselves, as even the papists had the art to evade

evade it. But as you foresaw that, notwithstanding your insinuation, it might still be urged by many, that its repeal would give a freer ingress to papists to offices, &c. No, say you, that cannot be, for the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, and the declaration against transubstantiation will remain in full force against them, and these oaths alone, without the sacramental test, have been long found *effectual* to exclude them from both houses. The insinuation of papal dispensations here would evidently have overturned your reasoning.

Will you believe me, gentlemen, when I say that it is with real pain I dwell on these things? But it would have been culpable in me, when I was engaged in stating my objections to your *case*, not to have noticed such ungenerous insinuations against us, such evident misrepresentations of our real situation, and such palpable incoherence of argument.

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On the remaining part of this *case* I have nothing to say : It has no reference to us, and its general reasoning is weighty and conclusive. One idea there is, often repeated, which, I think, must have made most of your readers smile. You wish to persuade them, that you are very sincere in your professions of good-will to the *church*. This, indeed, may be ; but it will not at once be admitted. It does not harmonize with many declarations, almost daily renewed, by many of your friends in other quarters. We have heard of gunpowder, begun to be laid under the old walls, grain by grain, which, in its proper season, will explode, and produce the desired effect. The skill and perseverance of your chief engineer are well known. We have heard also of predictions, uttered with almost inspired confidence, of the approaching downfall of this second anti-christian church. Serious and well-directed efforts are practised to second these assertions. The cordiality therefore of your
kind

kind professions may, perhaps, be suspected.

It would be idle in me to say, that I do not view with pleasure these attacks on the established church. For besides that I am an enemy to all ecclesiastical establishments, which the secular arm supports; it is bringing home to their own doors that war, which they once so successfully waged against us. They dispossessed us of our inheritance, and they fatten in our seats. Ages must sometimes elapse, before a conquered people can cheerfully bend their necks to the laws of the victor. Besides, the principles on which you ground your opposition are so congenial with the spirit of your boasted reformation, that I know not with what semblance of consistency, they can be rejected by rational protestants. I wish to see all restraints removed, which have been laid in the way of free discussion, and religious truths resting solely on their own internal strength. It is a poor compliment

pliment to any religion, to suppose that it wants the aid of secular indulgence or of penal statutes.

I have not distinctly heard the objections, which were made to your *petition* in the house of commons; but I understand they chiefly ran on the beaten ground of the danger of innovation in the best of all possible constitutions, in church and state. I believe certain doctrines were also hinted at, which, should they again warm the bosoms of dissenters, danger, they said, might be carried even into the political constitution of the state. Such apprehensions are, I dare say, groundless; and had our ancestors permitted them to operate as effectually on their minds, the reformation at least, which these politicians affect to regard as so signal a blessing, never could have been established. I know not why *optimism*, speaking of England, should rather be admitted in politics, than in the moral system of things. Every thing that is human

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is imperfect; and the paltry notion which, circumscribing the view, fixes it on an imaginary excellence, will be an eternal bar to improvement. The general arrangements in church and state can surely be meliorated, or the circumstances of England must be peculiar indeed. What I said of the *reformation* may be applied to the *revolution*. Why were not our forefathers authorised to regard their constitution as the best, for they knew none better? And had the maxim been steadily adhered to, the yoke of despotism might at this hour, have galled our necks.

The penal statutes, of which you and we complain, were made at a time, when real or imaginary danger seemed to call for their enactment. It is universally allowed that no such danger now exists. Shall the son then be visited for the sins of his father to the third and fourth generation? This is vindictive justice with a witness! No crime is committed; but penalties endure. *Salus populi suprema lex*,
has

has ever been admitted as the great basis of legislations: In our regard the order is subverted, and to punish even the unoffending citizen becomes the object of the law.

Gnossius hæc Rhadamanthus habet durissima regna.
VIRG.

It was once my wish that you, and we, and every British subject, who, for conscience sake, felt themselves aggrieved, should have united in a common petition to Parliament. Such a coalition of interests would, I think, have done us honor; and had no other good been produced, the measure at least might have removed prejudices, and have made us better friends. But to judge from your present declaration of sentiments, the day is yet distant, when we may hope to realize so desirable a plan. We are the elder branch of the family, and as it would have become us, so, I think, we should have been earnest to have set the example of brotherly love. Your consequence,

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we well know, could have given weight to our just petitions: In that we were interested. But also we are too conscious of our own real deserts, as men and as citizens, to think that our alliance would have dishonoured you. The blood which warms our veins, I once said, is almost as ancient as the hoary cliffs, that surround our island; and our sentiments, I trust, have not degenerated from those of our ancestors.

It is easy to account for the prejudices which, in this country, were originally taken up against us, for they date from the reformation; and I can trace their progress through sham plots, political devices, and popular rumours, for a long series of years. But from the revolution, though the piece still continued in the loom, I am rather surprised that hands could be found to work it. The mind then opened to large views: Commerce, agriculture, and successively the arts of war and peace so much engrossed general attention,

attention, that bigotry should have died away, and party-prejudice should have expired with it. It did not so happen; for bigotry still lives: prejudices flourish; and the constitution of intolerance seems almost as vigorous as ever.

Will you accuse me, gentlemen, of a culpable partiality, when I declare it as my opinion, that the English Catholics are the freest from rancour, from prepossession, and from religious antipathies, of any general society in the realm. I own, I may view them with too indulgent an eye, though hitherto I have not been suspected of it. Suppose the case to be true, and account for it: or do not account of it; it is not therefore less true, and it does us honour. Shall it be, perhaps, that the mild treatment of our country has weakened every acrid humour, and given nourishment only to those which may generate benevolence and candour.

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Had you not been disposed to have joined us, to which you were free, and to which many of you might have objected, still, why were hostilities to be commenced against us? Your printed *case* certainly seems to breathe this spirit. I pretend not that peace was before declared; but the character of the times appeared to have signed preliminaries, from which we augured great success. We had been labouring to still the animosity, which, from idle preconceptions, hung on the minds of the multitude; when you, the great body of the Dissenters, men of wisdom and sound policy, step forward to stem the progress of benevolence, and to reanimate long prejudice and the rancour of misjudging zeal. I shall be told that nothing of the kind was meant: What then did you mean? The illiberal sheet was carried from hand to hand; and it has been consigned, with peculiar diligence, to the best repositories of records, *in perpetuam rei memoriam*.

I there-

I therefore rejoice in your defeat. Had you succeeded, it would but have strengthened prejudices, and supplied fresh matter of triumph to the enemies of *real toleration*.

Since, in the year 1778, we obtained the small indulgence which government thought proper to bestow, our conduct has uniformly shewn that we deserved it. It has, in truth, shewn that we deserved a great deal more. The step then taken was meant as a prelude to many more ; but we at first only asked for little, and since that have remained silent, that a pause might be made, during which our friends might see how much we merited a continuance of their protection, and that our enemies might see, how unjust were their prejudices, and how groundless the apprehensions conceived against us. The time then, I trust, is fast approaching, when parliament will be again petitioned to take up our cause on a much wider scale than before, and to grant

grant us a redress of every grievance. This we wish the public to know. It is not our design to take them by surprise: let our friends and enemies view our conduct, with what minuteness they please; let them scrutinize our principles with the most guarded caution. This we challenge; and as far as may be, we will bare our bosoms to their inspection.

The propriety of granting, what was called a *complete toleration*, to men of all persuasions, seems to have been very generally admitted even by those, who opposed your petition, in the house of commons. Such toleration would give some ease, as it would remove restraints from the practice of religion; but how it can be termed *complete*, is not readily understood. Men must have bounded conceptions of *liberty* indeed, who can persuade themselves, that dissenters from the established church have no just claim to any toleration, but that which barely regards their religious belief. My claim to an *equal* participa-

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tion of all the rights of a British subject is paramount to every distinction, which a partial and unjust policy may have introduced; and he who abridges, or deprives me of, that right, is a *persecutor*, however highly he may talk of toleration, or extol the wonders of his liberal mind. A Spanish inquisitor, while the victim burns at the stake, talks even then of philanthropy, and throws from him the name of a persecutor.

I have heard it even maintained that we Roman Catholics, in our present situation, are not persecuted on account of our religious tenets: That the oaths and tests, of which we complain, are only meant as an *ordeal*, by which government may discover who are well-affected, and who are fit to be entrusted with power. Let us then allow as before observed, that there was a time, when our political principles were justly suspected, and that then the enactment of such laws was wise. Is there now any ground for such suspicion?

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Is it not rather universally granted that no men are better affected to the present civil constitution than ourselves? This being the case, what can justify the execution of these statutes; when the very motive, which alone, in the first instance, could lawfully produce them, is allowed to subsist no longer? With the same equity might our former governors have introduced prohibitory acts, though no just occasion had ever been given, and have defended, by the same reasoning, the propriety of the measure.

However, let government first grant us what they please to call a *complete toleration*, (and I hope they will do it unsolicited to give more value to the present) that is, the free and public practice of our religion, with permission to educate our children at home; and we may be disposed to wait, till some favourable concurrence of circumstances shall give both to you and us a general release from all other restraints. It is not possible that this period

be very distant. The doctrine of toleration, which is making its way, in all parts of Europe, in spite of the obstacles which established churches, and bigoted societies, daily oppose to its progress, must finally succeed; and the business will be done. Then, I think, it will appear that this boasted *alliance* between church and state, about which so many high-sounding words have been uttered, was founded on a misconception of things, and a palpable confusion of ideas, in themselves as distinct, as earth is from heaven. The evils, this system has occasioned, will then also be lamented; and it will be well if it shall not be too late to apply a remedy,

I have said, gentlemen, what I principally wish to suggest to you. It may help, perhaps, to remove some prejudices from your own minds, or, at all events, it may obstruct the spread of that impression, which, the general import, and the clauses I noticed, in your printed
case,

case, were calculated to make. I should be sorry to impute a motive to you, which I had rashly assumed; but certainly the tendency of your expressions was such as could not be mistaken. In a long work, an author, through inadvertence, may sometimes let words fall from him, which should be construed with indulgence. In a single sheet, where every expression is weighed, and whereby it is designed to convey the most precise and unequivocal ideas, even critical severity is put to defiance. I therefore inferred that you meant, Parliament and the public should understand, that, though you petitioned for a redress of grievances for yourselves, it was not your wish the same indulgence should be extended to others. On this ground, you aimed to shew that you only deserved it, and that the Roman Catholics particularly, whose plea, you apprehended, might be urged, not only formerly, by their misconduct, and merited punishment, but that even now they maintained doctrines, incompatible with the

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the civil welfare of the realm. All this you did not say in *express* words; but you said it by *insinuations*, which have a worse impression on the mind. I had reason then to make the reflections, I have made; and I submit them to you.

It cannot, I am sure, be said that what I have advanced has the least tendency to generate the smallest spark of *new* animosity. I hope it has rather a tendency to stifle and suppress the *old*. But I have freely delivered my sentiments, and I thought myself authorised so to do. The spirit I wish to strengthen in my own mind, and to infuse into that of others, is the spirit of candour and of general benevolence; and I have the happiness to know, as I observed before, that it widely prevails among those of my persuasion. Our church, indeed, where it is *established*, is, in some kingdoms, supremely intolerant: and so is the Protestant church in this. Time will shew which church shall set the first example
of

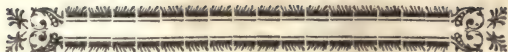
of christian moderation. You and we, who have no establishment to maintain, and consequently can be influenced by no allurements of interest or honour, have little, it should seem to surmount, that can obstruct, in our own minds, the growth of the social passions. But if this little be not surmounted; what would have been the case, had more potent obstacles stood in our way? We have no prejudices against you, and we shall wish you success in any future attempts you may make for a redress of grievances, provided they be grounded on more generous principles than the last. A return of similar sentiments we have a right to expect from you: but more than this, you have sufficiently told us, not to look for. We can rest, God be praised! on the equity of our own cause, and we will not disparage that of others to promote it.*

* Dr. Priestly in his *Letter* to Mr. Pitt, just published, the spirit and general reasoning of which, I and every friend

friend to liberty must applaud, has observed p. 7. that had the maxims of the minister been adopted before the reformation, the nation had now been *Catholics, and without a shadow of a toleration*.—In the hurry of composition, did not the Doctor then reflect what has so recently been done for the Protestants in Germany; what is their present situation in France, and how much soon it will probably be eased? If any society of christians are now without a shadow of *legal toleration*, they are the Catholics of this *Protestant* state.—P. 43 is an observation which has been applied to us, though obviously never meant by the author. Speaking of the discountenance shewn by government to the Dissenters, he says, “at the same time that it takes into its bosom that part of the community, which was ever noted for its disloyalty.”—If government has taken *us* to its bosom it is with the kindness of the bear who presses his enemy to his breast, or with the caresses of a step-mother, smiling on the child of her husband. The history of the house of Stuart will tell our loyalty, and from them we have transferred it to the reigning family; but we were not of a humour *lightly* to quit an old master. The veering mind as it is never constant, so is it seldom sincere.

OSCOTT, April 10, 1787.

T H E E N D.



To the Rev. Mr. BERINGTON.

DEAR SIR,

I Have just read, and with much satisfaction, your *Address to the Protestant Dissenters*, in which you appear to me to complain with great justice of the want of candour in the *Case* they lately presented to the members of parliament, relating to the Test and Corporation Acts; and which gave me much concern when I first saw it. I must object, however, to the compliments which your partiality has bestowed upon myself, and to your misconstruction of a passage in my *Letter to Mr. Pitt*, in the *Note* subjoined to the last page of your work.

I had observed that, had the maxims of Mr. Pitt been adopted before the reformation, this nation had now been Catholic, “ and without a

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“ shadow

“ shadow of a toleration.” This you think improper, because several Catholic states are *now* tolerant, and others are becoming so. This I acknowledge, and with the greatest pleasure. But at the time to which I referred, there was no such thing as *toleration* known. It was even unknown among Protestants till long after this period. Consequently, had the maxims on which I animadverted (which are hostile to all changes, and which would for ever have kept things as they once were) been rigorously adhered to, not only would Popery have been the established religion of this country, but Popery *without a toleration*.

I rejoice in the change that good sense, and the genuine principles of christianity, have of late years produced among the Catholics. I have no doubt but that, in the increasing light of the age, this liberality will extend itself among them; and I am sorry that Protestant states (and especially this country, whose greatest boast has been its tolerant spirit) should be so backward to follow the example you are setting them.

I could wish, as you do, p. 44, that all who are aggrieved by penal laws in matters of religion,

how

*Toleration may be the result of charity
or of indifference. It is usually the
latter.*

how widely soever they differ in other respects, would join in one common petition for relief; hereby expressing their good will to each other, and their sincere wishes that all who wanted relief might partake of it along with themselves. This is a cause in which the Catholic, the Presbyterian, the Independent, the Baptist, and the Quaker, are equally concerned; and by the joint support of which they would certainly have done themselves credit. Whether the application had been successful, or not, the parties would have appeared so respectable, as to be thought deserving of success, and the measure would, no doubt, have prepared the way for a more successful application in future time.

You Catholics had the honour to make the proposal, but we Protestant Dissenters had not the liberality to accede to it. This you candidly excuse, as proceeding from the bigotry and resentment which must be expected to remain from former times. But I hope that at length the example of such men as yourself, of Dr. Geddes, and others whom I could name of your communion, (with whom I think it an honour to be acquainted, and whose esteem I highly value) will aid our

own reflections, and bring us to be as generous as you are.

When I said that the government, while it discountenances the Dissenters, who were always the best friends to the present reigning family, “ took into its bosom that part of the community “ which was ever noted for its disloyalty,” you say that I have been supposed by some to mean the Catholics. But you justly add, that this was obviously never meant by me. Indeed, I had no view but to the *tories* in general, and the most zealous members of the church of England. It is so well known that this is the case, and that the Catholics are the most oppressed of all the British subjects, that if you had not observed it, I should not have believed that I could have been so misunderstood.

The time, I hope, is approaching, when, tho’ *we* should continue to be frowned upon, *you* will be restored to all your natural rights, and to the fullest exercise of your religion in this country. There will, at least, be one instance of oppression less in it, and in this I shall sincerely rejoice. I shall more contentedly remain much longer in my present condition, to see yours
 so

so much bettered. It would be the breaking out of a light, the beams of which might at length reach myself. If not, *homo sum: nihil humani a me alienum puto.*

I am,

With great respect,

Dear Sir,

Yours sincerely,

J. PRIESTLEY.

BIRMINGHAM, }
April 23, 1787. }



B O O K S

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